The 'Authoritarian' Trap—*Michael Walzer*

Nicholas von Hoffman on Baseball • Nathan Glazer on Ethnic Mobility

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TRB

from Washington
July 4 & 11, 1981

The Moscow Menace

Two dangerous men have just come out of Moscow. Joe McCarthy would have nabbed them in a minute. They threaten to put dangerous thoughts into the heads of gullible Americans at a time when the country is more united on the menace of Moscow than it has been for a generation. The biggest armament drive in history is sweeping through Congress; it will double arms expenditures even while social benefits for the poor are curtailed; it may well bring back double-digit inflation, or force the Federal Reserve Board to raise interest rates another notch. What of that? The loyal public accepts it as necessary. But now come tempting alternative voices.

One is from a particularly insidious father figure, the last man in the world you would suspect under the circumstances. It is—shhh!—Walter Cronkite. He was over in Moscow and talked not only to Kremlin figures but also to a group of veteran Anglo-American newsmen there. He appeared on television on the final hour of a five-part CBS documentary, "The Defense of the United States." What he hinted at was that the Russians are a lot like Americans in some ways, despite their repressive government, except they have been brutally conditioned by losing 20,000,000 people in World War II and by other factors, including an economy that works badly. Russia is encircled by a nuclear Europe and by a nuclear China, and its Warsaw Pact allies, like Poland, are unreliable. It has an aging leadership. Russians feel insecure, just as Americans do. Cronkite had the audacity to tell his trusting American audience that "since 1960 Soviet influence round the world actually has declined." Yes, their "so-called gains like Afghanistan and Angola take on a different perspective when they're measured against losses—like Egypt and China." Cronkite's most insidious comment, perhaps, came at the end: "But if their perception of America is flawed, as we believe it is, then our perceptions of the Soviet Union just could be flawed too. In the absence of any real dialogue the same old fears and doubts continue to dominate our relationship."

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As though Cronkite weren't bad enough, former secretary of state Cyrus R. Vance somehow got booked on NBC's "Meet The Press" last week after returning from Russia. He attacked the Reagan administration's treatment of the Soviets as "needlessly provocative . . . bear-baiting." Bringing up Jimmy Carter's old idea of a nuclear arms control agreement with Moscow, he cast gloomy hints that the world might blow up. (What weaklings these intellectuals are!) "The clock is ticking," he said. "SALT I has expired, by its terms, even though it is being de facto observed. SALT II has not been ratified. And the pace of development of weapons is proceeding at a rapid pace."

Unlike the anxious Vance position, President Reagan has taken an approach calculated to keep the Russians guessing and off balance. As a presidential candidate he first declared that the spread of nuclear weapons was not "any of our business." Later he said that he opposed the spread, but that it was extremely difficult to do anything about it. Finally, at his June 16 press conference, he took the "unqualified" position that he opposes proliferation and will "do everything in our power to prevent it."

This does not mean that Reagan has abandoned his tough attitude about the Russians. His platform declared "the present danger is greater than ever before in the 200-year history of the US." Reagan repudiated the Ford-Carter SALT II treaty as "fatally flawed." But in the campaign he declared in a paid CBS broadcast that, "As president, I will immediately open negotiations on a SALT III treaty. My goal is to begin arms reduction." This was comforting to those who felt that a strong man in the White House would make Russia mind its manners.

Anxious NATO allies have asked when Reagan would begin his negotiations with Russia and it has become a political issue in some countries. They are asked to arm themselves with US-made tactical weapons and know they will be the battleground if war comes. They yearn to know that somewhere people are bargaining to try to lift the strain. Reagan has now named two representatives for the bargaining table, and has made it clear that no one need fear he'll make a weak stand. He picked Yale professor Eugene Rostow as head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, a hard-liner formally associated with the Committee on the Present Danger, which fought ratification of SALT II. In contrast to Cronkite's cuddly comments on communism, Rostow declared last spring in an address at the University of Idaho, "The Soviet Union is proceeding now with breakneck speed to gain control of the Persian Gulf and to enlarge and strengthen its forces in Cuba and the Caribbean." He said he saw a "Soviet drive for empire" and declared "the Soviet policy of aggression is accelerating in momentum and is becoming more and more difficult to contain and confine." The hawks should rest assured with a man like that to see through the machinations of the subtle Kalmucks.

Of course Rostow might falter and turn soft, so Reagan has made retired lieutenant general Edward L. Rowny the actual negotiator with Russia. General Rowny helped negotiate the SALT II treaty and then resigned to fight it. He has one comforting belief, apparently shared by President Reagan: that the Russians will continue to negotiate even if the US rejects a treaty. "They need it, in my opinion, more than we do. They will come back to the table," he said in an interview last April. "I think it is as simple as establishing the willpower to bring this situation to fruition."

The administration believes this is the connecting thread and that Russia will take it. We will sell arms to China—what can Moscow do? Reagan attacks, provokes, ridicules. At his first press conference, on January 29, he said Russians reserve "the right to commit any crime: to lie, to cheat." Last month he told a press conference that communism is a sinking ship: "I think we are seeing the first beginning cracks: the beginning of the end."

It may be poor diplomacy, but it's great theater! Some timid people fear it. George Kennan recently wrote, "I can think of no instance in modern history where such a breakdown of political communication and such a triumph of unrestrained military suspicions . . . has not led, in the end, to armed conflict."

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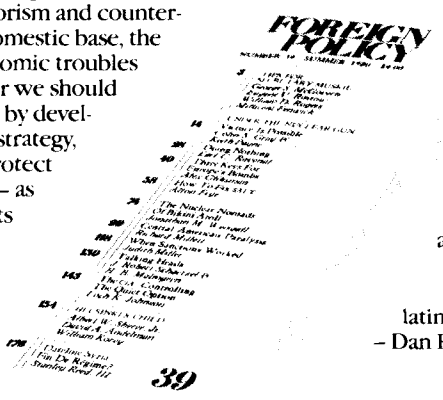

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Correspondence

Room at the trough

To the editors:
As Michael Kinsley suggests in "High on the Hog, I: The Mystery of the Free Lunch" (*TNR*, May 23), food stamps, WIC, school lunch, and other food programs, which have been very successful in eliminating hunger and malnutrition in America, have come under attack by the Reagan administration. The administration has determined that these food programs are no longer part of the "social safety net." The net will continue to include the expense-account lunch, a food program started some years ago to combat malnutrition among business executives. According to legend, in the dark and meager era before the expense-account lunch program, scurvy, rickets, and anemia stalked the boardrooms of our nation's corporations. CEOs couldn't plan; lawyers couldn't litigate; advertising executives couldn't brainstorm. Now, no more. Thanks to the expense-account lunch program, our business leaders are plump, if not productive. There is always room at the trough for the truly needy.

Pat Schroeder
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

'Skull full of mush'

To the editors:
Leslie Fiedler is lucky indeed to have students for whom the crucial problem is *what* to read rather than *how* ("Literature as an Institution," *TNR*, May 30). My students these past ten years have demonstrated an incapacity to understand the basic rhetorical elements of intelligent prose. Elements such as diction, tone, allusion, juxtaposition, or metaphor completely escape their comprehension. "Dense, complex" works like Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," William Carlos Williams's "The Use of Force," or George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" are beyond their ken.

What shall I, one of those young teachers so oddly second-guessed by Mr. Fiedler, teach in those precious few hours of class time—"ball-bouncing songs," "advertising slogans," and "sentimental novels"? Having grown up on the insipid pabulum of our American media, the average student of today enters college with a "skull full of mush," to quote a very learned and exacting man. It is that region, Mr. Fiedler, that needs to be explored and charted, not their viscera, which have become engorged upon that bubbling stew of "emotional motivation" and "relevance" so lavishly dished out by our education establishment. I wonder if in Rome they taught the Latin graffiti on the walls, or Homer and the *Aeneid*?

When was scholarly education not a matter of discrimination and judgment? Freshman composition is indeed "a desperate attempt," not to whitewash our citizenry, but to teach them to be at least literate, if they cannot be learned.

Shirley Copperman
New City, New York

The abortion option

To the editors:
The Washington Diarist of June 13 by M.M.K. was sharply critical of my anti-abortion stand, and asserted: "Somehow I do not find Jesse Helms and Henry Hyde in the front ranks of those demanding that Americans spend more money on foreign aid to help starving refugee children in Africa." I cannot speak for Senator Helms, but as for myself, I am the ranking Republican member of the House Banking International Financial Institutions subcommittee and have always been one of the most vigorous supporters of foreign aid—not only to Africa but all over the world. I have visited six African countries, including some of the poorest in the world, and have spoken out in debate for aid for these people. I have been in several refugee camps in Asia as well, including East Timor.

The same article criticized Secretary Schweiker for his assertion that recent abortion legislation still permitted "federal funds to pay for a D & C or for a morning-after birth control pill, before a diagnosis had been made that a rape or incest victim was pregnant." M.M.K. declared that "this position flies in the face of the anti-abortion drive to have the law declare that life begins at the moment of conception. Schweiker was saying, in effect, that destroying a fetus is all right if we just do it quickly." Overlooking M.M.K.'s confusion over zygote, embryo, and then fetus, Secretary Schweiker was saying no such thing. It takes up to 48 hours (and at least 24) before the sperm "fertilizes" the ovum. Hence, medical treatment *before* that time prevents a pregnancy—and no pregnancy, no abortion. Don't you owe it to your readers to have your facts right when you hold a public official up to ridicule across the nation?

Henry J. Hyde
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

To the editors:
I regret to say that your most recent editorial on abortion ("Right to Strife," *TNR*, June 6) contains a number of false and misleading statements. The most glaring falsehood is in the description of the current legal situation with respect to abortion. You claim that abortion is "subject to medical determination" in the second trimester, and that it is "banned" after the fetus is viable; and this claim is repeated by Morton Kondracke in his June 13 Washington Diarist. In fact, no "medical determination" is necessary for a second-trimester abortion—the only "medical" regulations permitted by the Supreme Court in the second trimester are those which are designed to protect the pregnant woman from the complications of her abortion. After viability, an abortion is legal if a single physician decides that the abortion will promote the woman's "health"; and "health" is defined here as a state of "total well-being," including emotional and financial well-being. In practice, it is impossible to "ban" any abortion performed by a physician, at any stage of pregnancy. These guidelines were established by *Roe v. Wade*'s companion decision, *Doe v. Bolton*, in 1973. Your claim that "the public seems to support" the present legal situation is therefore false: the latest Gallup poll shows only 25 percent support for abortion on demand, and all the major polls show that the majority of Americans want abortion to be legal only under certain rare circumstances.

The second set of falsehoods occurs in the treatment of federal funding for abortion. This is described as the work of a "zealous minority imposing its will on the majority," but the latest *Washington Post*/ABC News poll shows 54 percent popular opposition to all federal funding of abortion for poor women.

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The vote in the Senate on such restrictions this year was 52 to 43, which seems quite representative. The Ashbrook amendment, which you describe as a "cruel" attack on "poor women," has nothing to do with poor women: it deals with the coverage provided by federally subsidized health insurance plans for federal employees. Nothing in the Ashbrook amendment, or in any version of a human life amendment, requires physicians to "permit women to die," for the simple reason that there is no disease for which abortion is the only known "treatment." The alternative treatments, which generally save both mother and child, are more expensive than abortion, and the federal government shows itself willing to pay for these.

A third misleading statement is your claim that the legalization of abortion is saving over 200 women's lives every year. Figures from the National Center for Health Statistics show that 1,231 women died from abortion in 1942, but that this figure dropped steadily every year until it reached 70 in 1972 (the year before the Supreme Court's abortion decisions). This decrease was due to advances in medical treatment for women in general, as is clear from the fact that all other maternal deaths decreased at the same rate. Decreases since then are due to continued medical advances, as well as to "progress" in abortion technology. Also, it is unrealistic to pretend that the number of abortions performed is not affected by legalization, when the number has gone up every year since 1973 as more and more women give in to the societal pressure to accept abortion. Incidentally, the latest figures show about 1.5 million abortions a year, not the 1.2 million that you mention.

Richard Doerflinger
Bishop's Committee for Pro-Life Activities
Washington, DC

Popularity contestant

To the editors:
Does anybody you know really believe that a "new spirit is sweeping across our land," as TRB quotes Ronald Reagan as claiming (*TNR*, June 13)? Is Reagan really a "popular president," TRB's own phrase? Popular with *whom*? As the contents of most of the articles in *TNR* show, his policies are shortsighted, backward-looking, people-punishing, and downright crass. Whence comes this myth about the rebirth of the American spirit? Reagan's election and policies themselves represent a failure of both nerve and imagination, fueled by an anxious indulgence in denial. Perhaps it is this very denial that is in fact popular, and Mr. Reagan does embody it fully. But the good old days will not ever return, except briefly for the favored few, despite all the platitudes. Reagan is a symptom, not a solution.

Peter W. Castle
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Pentagon dollars

To the editors:
As workers, we're being shamed by stories of Japanese productivity. As patriots, we're asked to double our support for the Defense Department. As taxpayers, though, we are not invited to discuss the billions we spend on the Japanese, for these are Pentagon dollars.

Ronald Steel's "Containing Containment" (*TNR*, June 13) raises just such sticky questions. Unlike James Fallows's line-item budget critiques of particular guns and planes and tanks, Steel asks us to think in program budget terms. If half the defense budget goes to NATO, why not eliminate the bureaucracy and give the money directly to Europe as a block grant (less 25 percent) so it can buy its own armies? The defense of other nations should be labeled, and voted upon, for what it is: foreign aid.

With program budgeting, we could weigh the worth of showing the flag in the Persian Gulf. We could decide if there was enough in the till to take on Mozambique or El Salvador. And we would find we need not spend a penny for national defense. Our neighbors do not threaten; not even China could raise an occupation force large enough to subdue our pistol-packin' populace; and if the Soviets dropped all their bombs, ours would be an uninhabitable land giving off funny fumes drifting their way. (Moreover, we could neither occupy nor destroy the Soviets, which makes the nuclear arms race a keen joke.)

Still, Steel and Fallows, reasonable men both, miss the third, the political, way of viewing a budget. It's not why you spend the money, or how, but who gets the money you spend that counts.

Lee Wakefield
San Francisco, California

'Blood Brothergate'

To the editors:
Thank God Timothy Noah finally has stripped away the veil of secrecy and deception surrounding one of the most shameful chapters in the history of American journalism, the *New York Times*'s infamous "Blood Brothergate" ("Jimmy's Big Brothers," *TNR*, May 16). All Americans owe *The New Republic* a debt of gratitude for uncovering this 17-year-old sordid episode that has tarnished the *Times*'s great reputation and festered like a cancer on the body of the First Amendment ever since it burst upon the public consciousness in May 1964 on page 43 of the *Times*. How can any of us ever forget how the nation's attention was riveted to Junius Griffin's compelling series of four articles about incipient racial warfare in Harlem, now proven by *The New Republic* to have been nothing more than a few black kids jiving the *Times*? Surely we should have suspected something when the third article was relegated to page 61 and the fourth and last article, which ran 26 days after the first, was more analytical and factually fuzzy than its predecessors.

In my enthusiasm for *The New Republic*'s journalistic enterprise and long memory, I may have overlooked an important question: at a time when the integrity of American journalism, and particularly of black reporters, is dangerously vulnerable, was any useful purpose served by resurrecting a 17-year-old example of questionable reporting and equating it with the Janet Cooke-*Washington Post* Pulitzer hoax?

Albert Eisele
Falls Church, Virginia

Timothy Noah replies:
My point in resurrecting the "Blood Brothers" was to show that lurid and inaccurate tales of ghetto life are neither new nor peculiar to any one newspaper. The working environment that produces such stories, as I wrote in the article, "is the fault not of black reporters but of white editors, who hire too few black reporters and are too quick to believe stories of ghetto life that match their own misconceptions." Once the newsroom becomes fully integrated, the Janet Cookes and Junius Griffins—who represent a tiny fraction of black reporters—will no longer feel obligated to "play harder and faster."

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

July 4 & 11, 1981

Let Them Eat Jellybeans

If you want to know what is happening to social and economic justice in America, consider some events that took place in Washington on Tuesday, June 24. At the White House, President Reagan indignantly denied charges that his economic program is designed to benefit rich people. "What we are doing," he said, "is returning the American economy to the people." Just how the Republican regime in Washington defines "the people" was illustrated by events in the Senate Finance Committee and on the Senate floor. The Republican-dominated finance committee voted 14 to five to defeat Democratic Senator Bill Bradley's proposal to concentrate the individual tax cut among people earning $50,000 or less, while adopting special tax cuts for corporate executives, employees of multinational corporations, and persons who own land from which oil is pumped. Specifically, the committee reopened the loophole—closed since 1976—that let corporate executives take part of their salaries in low-cost stock options and get taxed on the proceeds at capital gains rates—40 percent of regular-income rates. The committee also voted to exclude from taxes $75,000 earned by Americans living overseas, even though the tax laws already allow them to deduct "hardship" costs such as housing, education, and medical care. And it voted to increase from $1,000 to $2,500 the credit against windfall profits taxes for owners of oil royalties.

The same day, the Republican-dominated Senate (with only four GOP senators dissenting) voted 52 to 46 to eliminate benefits to orphans from the Social Security law—where they are guaranteed as entitlements—and to make foster care, adoption assistance, and child welfare part of a block grant program which states may or may not choose to sustain and which is due to have its federal funding cut by 25 percent. By the same margin, the Senate also voted down a proposal to continue minimum levels of Social Security assistance—those which apply to the poorest workers in American society, including domestics and others who have made limited contributions to the system. An outraged and frustrated Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who had tried to save the orphan programs, declared to his colleagues: "The lobbies are empty today. The distinguished visitors gallery has no distinguished visitors. The children aren't here. They can't send us telegrams. They have no law firms representing them." Republican Pete Domenici, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, responded that "cutting anything is not easy. This is going to indicate whether you have the courage to bring this budget under control. You can't cut without cutting."

This all happened in one day last week, but it's representative of what's happening every day during the Reagan-Republican reign in Washington: a massive transfer of money is taking place. It is being pulled away from the poor, who may desperately need it to live, and it is being transferred into the pockets of the rich, who need it to enjoy life and to hire lawyers who can make them even richer. The Reagan administration came to power on the promise that it could restore the US economy to health by cutting taxes across the board and by eliminating only waste, fraud, and abuse from the federal budget. But American people were deceived by the nice-guy jellybean man they put in the White House. His tax-cut program is not across-the-board or even supply-side, designed to encourage productivity. It is merely lard for the wealthy. And his budget cuts not only go far beyond waste; they take away sustenance for the poor. In education, health, and safety programs, and student loans, they actually will injure the long-term economic well-being of the country. These programs are investments in the future of America, and Ronald Reagan is canceling them in some other interest.

Looking at Republican tax policy and regulatory pol-

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icy, one finds over and over again that the interests of the poor and, indeed, the long-term national interest is being sacrificed to the special interests—in exact contradiction to President Reagan's pledges. The deliberations of the Senate Finance Committee have amounted to an orgy of special-interest servicing. The day before it took care of corporate executives and holders of oil royalties, for example, the committee created a special subsidy for the savings and loan industry. It did so by authorizing a certificate that will pay just 70 percent of market-rate interest but whose proceeds will be tax-free up to $1,000 per investor. The cost to the Treasury will be three billion dollars a year—money that could be used to pay for food stamps or school lunches or aid to orphans. The beneficiaries (aside from the savings and loan and housing industries) will be persons in the 32 percent-or-higher tax bracket, families making above $32,000 per year—in other words, the top quarter of the nation's taxpayers. There is no evidence that the subsidy will do much to increase the overall amount of savings in the United States; most likely, the certificates will simply draw away money already invested in money market funds and the stock market. And, to the extent that this happens, investment funds will be diverted into home-building and away from industries involved in foreign trade.

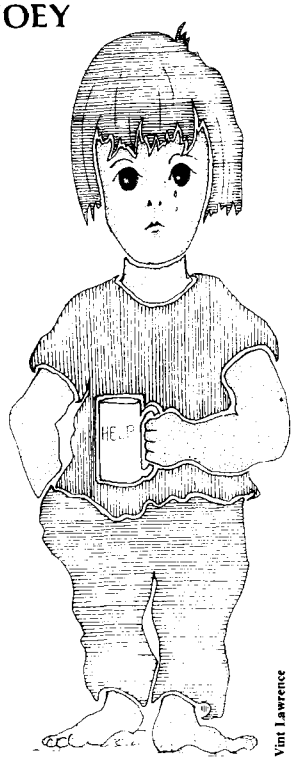
The same day that it voted this welfare program for the S&Ls, the committee adopted another benefit program for the rich—elimination of inheritance taxes on estates valued up to $600,000 and elimination of gift taxes on bequests of less than $10,000. This is all of a piece with the pattern of Reagan tax policy. Reagan's supposed across-the-board tax cut, when Social Security tax increases and inflation are figured in, actually is shamelessly skewed toward the wealthy. Persons making under $30,000 per year will end up paying higher taxes by 1984 than they did in 1981, while those making over $200,000 will pay nearly 16 percent less.

On top of that, the administration and even the Democratic House are determined to grant half a trillion dollars in tax relief to corporations over the next ten years, of which $120 billion will go to utilities and between $70 billion and $100 billion will go to oil companies. Meanwhile, the Reagan budget calls for a 42 percent increase in federal subsidies for the nuclear industry, while fossil fuel and conservation funding is being cut. Interior Secretary James Watt has begun huge expansions in the number of offshore oil leases being granted and inland mineral leases, all of which benefits corporations by reducing the cost of each lease. The governors of California, Wyoming, Montana, and Utah all have complained about Watt's decisions on environmental and economic grounds, but he has brushed aside the objections. So much for the administration's dedication to federalism when special interests are to be served.

The Reagan administration is opposed to federal subsidies to employ the jobless or assist the handicapped, but it has maintained supports for tobacco growers and has declared its intent to cut back on standards for job safety and for air and water pollution. Taken together, what this program amounts to is a wholesale reversal of American economic and social policy, not to benefit the whole population, but its wealthiest fraction. It is a travesty the American people did not knowingly support in the 1980 election. We cannot believe they would support it if they understood it now. It is time that Democrats in Congress stopped moaning about these policies of reaction only to acquiesce to them in the end, and begin informing the American people that the future of the nation is being sold to fat cats.

NOT AN ADVERTISEMENT

MEET JOEY



Vint Lawrence

Joey has no shoes to wear to school. Joey's mother fixes his oatmeal over an open gas flame. At night, rats scuttle in the corners of Joey's unheated basement apartment. The floor is dirt; cholera germs cling to the tattered curtains. And yet no one cares for Joey. He's an outcast, a pariah, an untouchable here in the richest nation on earth.

Why?

You see, Joey's a composite.

Not so long ago, composites thrived in the great cities of our nation, and in many foreign lands. They were free to join the Army, to take drugs, to wear red pants and sell their bodies on Lexington Avenue. But no longer.

Today, certain newspapers are waging a vicious smear campaign against composites. This may not affect you or your children, but suppose this crusade broadened to include background sources, off the record sources, highly placed sources, even spokespersons? The innuendo industry would close its doors forever, and thousands would be thrown on the streets.

Like Joey.

Do what you can. Please.

FUND FOR THE COMPOSITES
Janet Cooke and Michael Daly, co-chairpersons

Jon Carroll

Jon Carroll is a senior editor of *New West.*

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The owners' squeeze play.

Stee-rike!

Beisbol been bery, bery gud to dem, as Garrett Morris might have said of the striking major leaguers on the old "Saturday Night Live" show. Certainly that is the opinion of millions of fans who see $400,000-a-year players striking and, coincidentally, ruining the game for this year.

Player selfishness, goes the theory, has wrecked the season. The strike has gone on so long already that the lost games can't be made up. Each team in each league will not be able to play each other team an equal number of games, thus rendering any championship highly suspect. The World Series won't be between the two best teams, just the two luckiest who happen to have the easiest schedule. Moreover, the players themselves can't keep their pitching and hitting skills at big league sharpness without playing. The season is wrecked, and a wonderfully interesting season it promised to be, with the Mexican pitching sensation Fernando Valenzuela in Los Angeles, Billy Ball in Oakland, and close, nicely played races in the eastern divisions of the two leagues. Next winter's hot stove league will be big on swapping grudges. There will be no pennant races—at least none worthy of the name—to rehash while watching football, a game as brutish as baseball is somnambulantly artful.

The strike, in reality, was forced on the players. According to the terms of the owners' proffered contract, the athletes either had to walk out when they did, or, by climbing into uniform, would have had to accept a new arrangement whereby they couldn't switch jobs unless the new employer paid big money to the old employer. It's hard to imagine an arrangement better calculated to keep salaries down. A demagogue might even liken it to slavery.

A player's right to move from one club to another after his contract has expired is a relatively new one in baseball. This right was finally won in the courts in 1975 and now the owners want to abrogate it. For baseball fans it would be better to abrogate the owners. They are a costly encumbrance. In large measure big league baseball is supported by the taxpayers who've put up the money for the stadiums where the teams play. There are only a few privately owned fields like Fenway Park in Boston and the two ballparks in Chicago. Since we have socialism for the stadiums, why not have socialized ball clubs? It wouldn't cost much. For the price of a few bats and balls we would be rid of the owners, as scurvy a lot of vulgarians as ever found a way into a tax shelter.

Or the players themselves could just announce they'd rented a field and were selling tickets to fans who cared to watch them play ball. Who needs the owners? They contribute nothing—not managerial skill, not public relations finesse, not an ability to conduct labor negotiations, and certainly not the only thing capital is needed for, the ball parks where the teams play. As Jim Bouton says, maybe the players don't deserve all that money, but the owners don't deserve it even more.

The owners are only doing what other businessmen are doing these days. They are demanding "give-backs," that is, they want to snuff out concessions that were won by their employees' unions in a happier and more prosperous time. Give-backs take the form of less pay, as in baseball and at Chrysler, or speed-ups or other kinds of changed work rules. We've seen them in countless industries like rubber, steel, construction, coal, transportation, and government service. They are the proof of how weak American trade unions have become. In a number of instances, unions have devolved into the capitalist counterpart of official trade unions in Communist countries. They are enforcers of discipline, the bulwark against wildcat work stoppages, sabotage, or absenteeism. The union's job has degenerated into coming around to the people on the line to say, "Listen, take the speed-up because otherwise management is gonna close the goddam plant on ya." In this situation about all the union can say to its members is, "You'd get a worse hosing if you were totally unorganzied."

EVEN THE PUBLIC SERVICE employee unions that appeared invincible ten years ago are not winning many strikes anymore. The boys—George Meany's ginks, the guys he'd sit around the pool playing gin rummy with at AFL-CIO executive committee meetings—still go to Miami Beach to hand out big tips and put on airs, but there's nothing on their agenda. The politicians have learned they don't need them; the papers don't even think it worthwhile to expose them. The only people still pretending big labor is big is the Right to Work Committee, which would evaporate if its contributors came to understand that the power of the Big Labor Boss has gone the way of the power of the Big City Boss.

The baseball players' union looks solid, democratic, and notably short on bosses, large or small. It still will have a hard time winning its strike, because strikes are tough to win in the face of hostile or even indifferent community sentiment, and seldom in the past 60 years has the national atmosphere been less sympathetic to unions or to the concerns and grievances of workers, organized or not. There is a great deal of talk about employment and jobs these days, but not about how much the job pays. If you get any kind of job at all, the message is, be grateful, work hard, and don't go agitating around.

During the protected summer of the Republican ascendancy from Lincoln to Hoover, one of the party's perennial campaign principles was that the American working man was or should be the highest-paid worker in the world. Coolie labor was an un-American idea. Throughout that long period it would have been

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unthinkable to criticize American workers because they were making more than foreigners like the Japanese or Germans. The proof that America was great was that Americans made more money, that the American standard of living was the highest in the world. No more. Henry Ford—the greater, not the epigone bearing his name—made himself a national hero by introducing the eight-hour, five-dollar working day. Now, whatever the occupation, unless it is chairman of the board, the person is being paid too much.

It is only a matter of time before the baseball players will be told that the Japanese, engaged in the same work of running, hitting, and catching, are paid less and hit more home runs. Productivity, boys, and they never argue with the ump.

Nicholas von Hoffman

Let's give an 'old shoe' the boot.

Waldheim Again?

Daniel Patrick Moynihan likes to tell a story from his early days at the United Nations, back when he was public member of the American delegation and George Bush was ambassador. It was 1971, and the UN Security Council was choosing a nominee to succeed U Thant, the UN's third secretary general. The US pulled for Max Jakobson, a sympathetic Finn. It got Kurt Waldheim. "Our candidate," Moynihan recalls wryly, "was a Jewish Socialist, and the winner was a German infantry officer." In other words, the US usually has to take what it can get in UN elections. This time around, as Waldheim's second five-year term nears an end, the Reagan administration has all but resigned itself to swallowing hard and voting for the canny Austrian again. And barring some colossal misstep between now and next December's election, Waldheim is believed all but certain to get an unprecedented third term.

The casual observer might be excused some small confusion about the Reagan team's apparent choice. Waldheim, after all, has few staunch fans on the Reagan right—or anywhere else, for that matter. Though Waldheim gets grudging credit for his personal charm and political survival skills ("usually avoiding the charge of doing too little and almost never being accused of doing too much," as Reuters put it), his tenure has hardly been distinguished. Some diplomatic observers—who tend to split hairs in polite workaday discourse between "concern" and "regret"—turn surprisingly undiplomatic (at least on "deep background") in evaluations of Waldheim. He is described in some quarters as everything from a self-interested weakling who has lost his credibility to "an ineffective Austrian quasi-martinet."

To be fair, part of what angers Waldheim's critics has less to do with the man himself than with the institution he nominally heads. Waldheim often complains, with some justification, that trying to please the whole General Assembly is like trying to please 154 separate bosses. Caught in a permanent rhetorical crossfire, Waldheim most often stays scrupulously—but also timidly—neutral. He spelled out this choice almost immediately upon taking office: "A secretary general that is too much of an activist won't last longer than a year."

He has lasted quite a while by now, and it is not readily apparent why the Reagan administration—which, one senior official says, wants to "put the UN back on the right track"—should wish to see him last longer. Unfortunately, there are no official explanations forthcoming, because the administration has made no official endorsement. Carl Gershman, counselor to UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, maintains, "As Lane Kirkland said in the Democratic primaries, our position is perpendicular—we don't lean in any direction." Privately, though, a high State Department official acknowledges that the administration sees no palatable alternative to Waldheim. "Despite our criticism of Waldheim," the official says, "he is somebody we can work with." Pointing out that Waldheim is "a man of the West" and is "very careful to walk a tightrope," the official admits to having changed his view since joining the administration and observing the UN more closely. "One of the *least* perplexing and disgusting things about this organization," he says, "is that Waldheim is the best you can do."

That isn't good enough for some critics. Representative Stephen J. Solarz, a New York Democrat, has launched what he calls an "AABW [Almost Anybody But Waldheim] campaign." Solarz is circulating a letter—addressed to Ronald Reagan—among members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, former UN delegates, and others with professional ties to the UN. The letter urges Reagan to look for a "suitable replacement" for the "lackluster" secretary general, and carries on, in purposely muted tones: "Serious questions have been raised about Mr. Waldheim's performance of his duties, both as an administrator and, more importantly, as the diplomat charged by the international community with . . . mediating difficult and dangerous disputes around the globe."

Solarz, when speaking for himself alone, calls Waldheim a "turkey" who has many critics and virtually no heartfelt support. Echoing common complaints about Waldheim, Solarz is especially upset at Waldheim's "gratuitous criticisms of Israel." He also points to Waldheim's needless sluggishness in organizing a UN conference on Kampuchea; his ineffectuality in following up the UN resolution on the Soviet invasion of

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drawing by Vint Lawrence for *The New Republic*

Afghanistan; and his outright negative influence in negotiations during the prolonged hostage affair in Iran. Solarz apparently has little patience for the insider's argument that Waldheim is the best the UN can do. "It's not up to me to pick a replacement," he says. "I'm saying the guy's a bum and he ought to be yanked."

The yanking can be almost that simple if the Reagan administration wants it to be. Since the election is considered a "substantive" (as opposed to "procedural") matter, any of the five permanent members of the Security Council—the US, USSR, Britain, France, or China—may simply veto Waldheim's renomination. But leaving aside the likelihood that a US veto would offend some European allies (who tend to like what they see as Waldheim's sobriety and caution), the Reagan administration, unlike Solarz, *would* have to help find a replacement. And observers of all ideological stripes agree that given the UN's fractious bloc politics, this task would be painfully slow. Once Waldheim were out of the running, for example, practically any candidate endorsed by China or the US would be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. And even if the candidate survived the scrutiny of the five permanent members, he or she still would need a majority of the Security Council—and finally face possible rejection by the General Assembly. The Reagan team undoubtedly has figured that keeping Waldheim would be much easier. Britain and France already have endorsed him, China is said to have reconciled itself to another term, and the Soviet delegate, though shunning direct comment, has allowed to the *New York Times* that "old shoes fit best."

If Reagan wants to discard this old shoe, there are several alternatives making the rounds of the UN whisper circuit this month. First on everyone's short list of plausible challenges to Waldheim is Salim Ahmed Salim, the American-educated foreign minister of Tanzania and president of the 1979 General Assembly, who is closely allied with Peking. But Salim, who is thought to be exceptionally able and articulate, is not much liked by the Soviets or the Reaganauts. A high State Department official, though refusing to say whether he would recommend vetoing Salim, said the US would not support anyone inclined to "mouthing Marxist rhetoric." Other names mentioned include Shridath Ramphal of Guyana, secretary of the Commonwealth; Tommy T. B. Koh, a Singaporean who presides over the UN Law of the Sea conference; Enrique V. Iglesias of Uruguay, head of the UN energy conference; James Joanna of Sierra Leone, UN personnel director; Carlos Ortiz de Rozas of Argentina; and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, a Paris-born Iranian and former UN high commissioner for refugees. Prince Sadruddin is particularly attractive to Reagan aides, but he is thought to need strong bloc support in the Islamic world to stand any chance at all.

There's the rub. Reagan aides *say* they are withholding any endorsement until the fall, in the hopes that some preferable alternative to Waldheim—such as Sadruddin—will build a constituency before December. But if they really want to find an alternative, their neglect of the issue is hard to explain. The administration is well aware that a lot of politicking goes into UN elections. Any serious challenge to Waldheim must be mounted well before next fall. Yet Reagan aides are doing next to nothing to set a plausible challenge in motion.

A widespread rumor, circulating among senior officials and other informed observers, may help explain the Reagan team's inaction. According to the rumor, Waldheim wants a third term, but not a *whole* term; part way through he'll resign as secretary general to run for the largely ceremonial presidency of Austria; and meanwhile Mexican president José Lopez Portillo, by that time out of a job, will try to get the UN post. (A spokesman for Lopez Portillo points out that "there are no official declarations whatsoever in that regard," and has no further comment.) Moynihan says the whole improbable story reminds him of New York politics, but some observers say the US might support Waldheim with the understanding that he'll be gone in two or three years.

That rationale is a bit lame. If nobody likes Waldheim and the most that can be hoped for is a short reprieve from what is certain to be a lengthy fight when he steps down, it is hard to find compelling reason to give Waldheim—who already has served longer than any predecessor—another term. As Charles William Maynes, former assistant secretary of

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state for international organizations, points out, the office of the secretary general suffers when an incumbent must spend a year in a thinly disguised campaign for reelection. Even sympathetic observers agree that this is precisely what Waldheim is doing—shuttling to Washington, London, Paris, Moscow, and Peking, not to mention lunching with *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, who has close ties to Reagan's UN team.

Perhaps the UN would be better off with a longer—and non-renewable—term for its secretary general. Certainly it would be better off with a bit of vitality and moral leadership. For there are two ways to achieve the neutrality that Waldheim says he strives for. A secretary general can take real stands on important issues, as long as he avoids framing complex questions in a partisan black and white. Or he can make Waldheim's choice, and adopt a numbing and unrelenting taste for gray.

Barton Gellman

Divide and conquer, or just conquer.

Republican Redistricting

An odd conceit has arisen among Democratic party functionaries on the subject of reapportionment. They concede that the Republicans have the advantage of millions to spend on chiseling out new districts, and don't deny that the Republican party has hired a phalanx of the ablest computer experts and legal advisers and field operatives its money can buy. But the Democrats insist they have a hidden advantage: a better strategy. "Reapportionment is a question of political strategy more than numbers," says Ann Lewis, the political director of the Democratic National Committee. And she and other party professionals insist that the strategy applied by Democrats in state after state will make reapportionment, predicted to be a disaster for the Democratic party, not so painful after all. Martin D. Franks, executive director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, suggests that the Republicans may pick up only four or five seats in Congress through redistricting.

Fat chance. Guesses about which party will win freshly carved districts can be hazardous. In New York in 1971, Governor Nelson Rockefeller and the Republican-controlled legislature thought they had drawn a half-dozen new Republican seats in the House of Representatives. By 1974, all these had been won by Democrats, a reversal caused mainly by Watergate. But barring another Watergate, Republicans are in fact likely to gain 12 to 14 new House seats through reapportionment alone. This gives them an extraordinary hedge against the normal pattern of off-year losses by the party in the White House.

Democrats find themselves in this unenviable situation for a variety of reasons. Despite the brave words of Democratic party leaders, the Republicans' most palpable edge is in strategy. The plain fact is that except in a few states such as California, the Democrats don't seem to have any strategy at all. Democratic shortcomings in money, technical expertise, and planning are significant, but they pale beside the strategy gap. For starters, Democrats haven't figured out what the Republican strategy is, though it is a simple one. The Republican party is committed to pursuing every legal means available to maximize its strength through reapportionment. In states the Republicans don't control, they are pursuing a strategy of divide and conquer. In Texas, with its heavily Democratic legislature, Republicans caught Democrats by surprise by championing Hispanics and blacks who want more congressional representation. This was not done out of sudden compassion for poor minorities. With Democratic voters concentrated in Hispanic and black districts, the Republican party has a better chance to carry all the neighboring districts.

In states under Republican rule, the Republicans don't bother to divide. They just conquer. Again, Democrats have been caught off guard and have responded feebly. In Indiana, Republicans pushed through a congressional plan that lumps three Democratic representatives in the same district and should transform the delegation from a six to five Democratic majority, to seven to three Republican (Indiana loses one seat because of population loss). As a follow-up, a Republican official filed suit against the plan—to validate it, not to kill it. "The idea is to file suit against your own plan to get standing and pick your own judge," said Kimball Brace of Election Data Services, a private firm involved in reapportionment. "It's a good strategy."

WHERE IT PAYS, Republicans are willing to go the "good government" route. This is the case in Ohio, where the party figures it will benefit from impartiality in redistricting. This was also the case in Washington State, where the party platform last year called for a nonpartisan commission on redistricting. Then the party captured the legislature and governor's office, and the strategy shifted. Republicans hastily passed a plan that jeopardized at least two Democratic representatives. It was vetoed by Republican governor John Spellman, however, because several moderate Republican representatives didn't like the plan either. But new lines for the state legislature became law. And Republicans, once more surprising Democrats, made sure a suit was filed against the law.

The most cynical aspect of the Republican reapportionment effort can be seen in the bid to create or preserve minority seats. This ploy was made possible by one of the more telling lapses in strategy by Demo-

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crats: they failed to reconcile the interests of minorities with those of whites. In fact, they didn't try, so unsuspecting were they of Republican intentions to exploit minority interests. In Michigan, Republicans are cheerfully acceding to the preservation of two black congressional seats in Detroit. "In order to preserve their two black seats, Democrats are going to make some of their other seats vulnerable," grins Representative Guy A. Vander Jagt of Michigan, who heads the House Republican campaign committee. "We, as Republicans who always have an open door to blacks, are willing to go along." The new vulnerable seats are those of suburban Democratic representatives, who will find their districts shoved into the Republican hinterlands.

IN TEXAS, Republicans have forged a loose alliance with two Democratic constituency groups, Hispanics and blacks. Last spring, party officials conferred with Hispanic leaders, who were already getting technical assistance on reapportionment from the Republican-oriented Rose Institute of Claremont College in California. "We [Hispanics] said, 'This is what ought to happen in reapportionment,'" says William Velasquez, the executive director of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. "They said, 'OK.'" In drafting the Republican plan for congressional seats (Texas has 27, a gain of three), "we let them [Hispanics] have everything south of Henry B.," says Rick Rogers, the political director of the Texas Republican party. This meant all of south Texas below the San Antonio district of Representative Henry B. Gonzalez. The Republican and Hispanic plans both called for five Chicano seats. "It's fair and equitable to have five of them," argues Wayne Thorburn, the executive director of the Texas Republican party. "And a side benefit is that it improves Republican chances in the other districts."

Thorburn acknowledges that, ideologically, Mexican-American leaders "are not with us. But in drawing the districts, they see there is no common interest." More important, they see no common interest with the ruling Democrats in Texas. There is no room for agreement between Hispanic and Anglo Democrats on reapportionment. "The established, good old boy Democratic machinery has set up plans to chop up Republican neighborhoods and Hispanic neighborhoods," says Raul Noriega of Texas Rural Legal Aid. "If you consolidate those splits, you throw in the Anglo Democrats against the Republicans. That weakens the Anglo Democrats."

The Texas legislature balked at creating a fifth Hispanic congressional seat. There are currently four, two of which are represented by non-Hispanics. It also refused to draw a second black district in Texas, this one in Dallas, which Republicans and some black activists had joined in advocating. Republican governor William Clements claimed the new black district (actually about 45 percent black and 20 percent Hispanic) was "essential." And he declined to accept the redistricting plan from the legislature because it did not include this district. This necessitates a special legislative session in July on redistricting. Republicans acknowledge that the new black district would be Democratic. They favor it, though, as a means of corralling Democratic voters in a single district and making neighboring districts, such as that of Democratic representative Jim Mattox, more Republican.

In Virginia, Republicans have demonstrated that they have no intrinsic yearning to create minority districts. Blacks comprise nearly 20 percent of the state's population, but they have little representation. They have none of the ten congressional seats. The "Jefferson Plan," devised by liberal Democrats, would have carved out a new district, about 50 percent black, that might elect a black representative. Republicans, who have nine of the ten House seats, opposed the plan since it probably would have cost them a seat. So did many Democrats, with whom the liberals had failed to form a common strategy. The result: no black seat and a new congressional map likely to preserve at least eight of the Republican representatives. "I'd have to say," confesses Maxene Fernstrom, the redistricting chief for the Republican National Committee, "that we have come out of some states with Democratic legislatures a little better than I thought we would. Virginia, for instance."

Fred Barnes

Fred Barnes is national political reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*.

The big missile is a big bomb.

MX Hits the Fan

If François Rabelais's mythical giant, Gargantua, had a nuclear counterpart, it would be the MX missile system. Should the MX be approved, it would entail the largest and most expensive construction project ever undertaken. Although the Pentagon and defense contractors claim it to be strategically imperative, economically salubrious, and environmentally sound, a growing number of both hawks and doves challenge all of these assumptions, denouncing the MX as the greatest boondoggle in history. On July 1, a 15-member "blue ribbon" panel of prominent citizens, appointed by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to study the project, was scheduled to report its recommendations. It is still too early to write the MX postmortem, but there is every indication that Congress will demand that the system be truncated.

The problem with the MX project lies less with the missile itself than with the proposed land-basing mode now under the auspices of the Air Force. Designed to counter the perceived vulnerability of America's cur-

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rent land-based missiles, the plan calls for shuttling some 200 MX missiles among 4,600 underground shelters throughout the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada. The intention is to keep the Soviets guessing about the location of each missile. This sounds plausible in the abstract, but the scale and requirements of this overblown shell game are staggering. According to Air Force figures, over 8,000 miles of heavy-duty road and 660,000 new homes would have to be built. In order to shuttle the 190,000-pound missiles, a fleet of 200-foot, 750-ton transporters would need to be developed. The project would require 1.5 million tons of cement (a surplus quantity the United States currently does not have the capacity to produce), 400,000 tons of steel, and over 100 billion gallons of water. The Air Force says the system would be deployed over 8,500 square miles, an area slightly larger than Massachusetts. But Herbert Scoville Jr., president of the Arms Control Association and former assistant director of the CIA's Scientific Intelligence division, claims the deployment area would encompass a total of about 40,000 square miles. This is equivalent to the combined areas of Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Under the MX plan, much of this area would be closed to the public.

Early Pentagon estimates projected the cost of the MX system at $30 billion. In 1980, the General Accounting Office revised the estimate to $55 billion. The most recent price tag, issued in June 1981 by the Congressional Budget Office, estimates the whole system could cost up to $70 billion. After adjusting for minimal inflation and low cost overrun, the price could easily exceed $100 billion. Oklahoma senator Henry Bellmon, ranking Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, predicts a price of $120 billion, and the Pentagon now concedes the price may fall into the $100 billion range after all.

ALTHOUGH members of Congress increasingly are coming to view the MX as an unfeasible plan, and a plethora of military analysts are still contesting its strategic value, enthusiasm for the project could not be greater among defense contractors. Their eagerness is understandable. The MX hasn't yet been officially approved, but the federal government already has invested more than two billion dollars in defense contracts and currently spends four million dollars a day to develop the system. More than 10,000 workers are now employed, and nearly 1,000 companies are involved. Should the project gain approval, multi-million-dollar contracts would follow. So lucrative is the project that; in an effort to sell the MX, the major contracting companies—Martin Marietta, Rockwell International, Boeing, and others—have hired high-powered public relations firms throughout the country to clear up "misconceptions" about the system. Smith & Harroff Company in Washington, DC, has set up an "MX Information Bureau" to disseminate pro-MX material to the press and public. Slick color brochures and pamphlets stress the number of jobs the system would create and the Air Force's commitment to make the world safe again and to protect the environment. Contractors also have hired Cambridge Reports to conduct nationwide polls about the MX. The firm claims to have discovered "striking" evidence of public support for the defense system, and its report was recently sent to the White House. However, as Michael Kinsley has pointed out ("The Art of Polling," *TNR*, June 20), there is good reason to be skeptical about the reliability of Cambridge Reports's methods and results.

BOTH THE AIR FORCE and the defense contractors maintain that the panoply of problems created by the MX basing mode will be "mitigated," though it is not clear just how this is to be done. For example, the Great Basin receives an average of 8.4 inches of rainfall per year. There is no surface water from which the MX can draw the 100 billion gallons of water the system requires, so the project must tap groundwater. Both Utah and Nevada state engineers have refused to grant water permits for the MX, since the area already consumes more than can be replenished. The solution of the Air Force and the defense contractors' is to buy water from private water users in the area. But although this proposal circumvents the obstacles created by the state engineers, it does nothing to resolve the serious environmental problems resulting from the depletion of groundwater. Other major ecological concerns include air pollution caused by the massive quantities of dust stirred up during construction, the removal of about 160,000 acres of topsoil deemed crucial to livestock grazing, and, in Utah, the possibility of seismic activity.

Yet even if Air Force planners could resolve the ecological problems, proponents of the system would face an arsenal of litigation and political opposition. In early May the Mormon church condemned the proposed basing mode. The church forms a considerable political constituency: of the 1,446,000 people living in Utah, one million are Mormons. They are not opposed to the MX missile itself, but simply to having the system based in their own backyard. They "plead with our national leaders to marshal the genius of the nation to find viable alternatives which will secure at an earlier date and with fewer hazards the protection from possible enemy aggression which is our common concern." The Shoshone Indian tribes of Utah and Nevada have also spoken out against the missile project. There are some 313 Native American ancestral and sacred sites in the area, 39 of them within one mile of planned construction. Sixteen Shoshone reservations are within the proposed deployment area. Should the MX be approved, the tribe would file a spate of lawsuits that could tie up the project for years. Utah state senator Francis Farley already has filed suit to block the project.

Congress could bypass these objectives, but given

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the anti-MX mood on the Hill, such action seems unlikely. Leading the opposition to the MX basing mode are two senators whose states, according to the public relations spokesmen for defense contractors, would benefit economically from the plan: Jake Garn of Utah and Paul Laxalt of Nevada. Although defense contractors claim that the project would be a boon to small commercial businesses, and that general prosperity would emerge from the large population influx, Garn and Laxalt see things differently: the massive destabilization of the economy and the environment that would result far outweighs any benefits Utah and Nevada might realize. Garn, a member of the Appropriations Committee's defense and military construction panels, and Laxalt, chairman of the military construction panel and a close friend of Reagan, last week submitted an alternative that discards the Air Force's MX basing mode altogether. The Garn-Laxalt proposal calls for putting the new MX missiles in the existing Minuteman silos, immediately building the single anti-ballistic missile defense system permitted under the existing ABM treaty, and developing further ABM technology with a view to deploying a full system unless a new SALT treaty can be negotiated by 1985.

If Reagan should decide to adopt the present plan, Congress can still block it. On June 4 the House passed the Simons Amendment, which forbids any final action concerning the MX until Weinberger justifies the president's decision to Congress. The bill gives Congress 60 days in which to veto the president's decision. If the plan survives this test, the president would have to apply to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, for some 160,000 acres of land for the MX. One well-placed staffer says that if the vote were taken today, all but two of the 42 representatives on the House committee would oppose the current Air Force plan.

Too big, too expensive, and of only questionable strategic value, the MX project more closely resembles a Rube Goldberg contraption than an effective defense system. Even with the strongest executive endorsement, Congress probably would nibble the scheme to death. The administration's final decision is expected sometime in August. With the myriad of problems surrounding the MX and vehement congressional opposition to the system, the administration is likely to scrap the whole Utah/Nevada basing plan and settle for a cheaper, less grandiose alternative. In the meantime, debate continues, and the project goes on costing us four million dollars a day.

Michael A. Lerner

You can't take Bayonne out of Barney.

Frank Liberalism

by Emily Yoffe

If physiognomy is destiny, then Barney Frank had no choice but to be a politician. Even as a 24-year-old Harvard graduate student working in Mississippi during the civil rights battles of the 1960s, he was described as cigar-chewing, heavy-set, and looking like a traditional pol. Today, as a 41-year-old freshman congressman, still chewing the cigar and carrying the weight, he looks oddly out of place on Capitol Hill, where blow-dried Republican pretty young things set the style. But even more anachronistic than his appearance is his willingness to characterize his political philosophy (some might say his willingness to *have* a political philosophy) in a single word: liberal. Frank, who represents Massachusetts's fourth district—the seat vacated by Robert Drinan on orders of the pope—is one of the few avowed liberals elected to Congress last November. He is also one of the best reasons liberals have for believing that their type is not, in fact, about to go the way of those species that environmental laws soon will no longer protect.

If erstwhile liberals are wearing sackcloth and ashes this season, Barney Frank will stick to his own standard, though disheveled, wardrobe. Since his student days he has worked unflaggingly to make government an enemy of inequality and deprivation in society. His belief in the processes of government did not waver when his peers were turning to radicalism, nor has it wavered under the Reagan administration's conviction that the free market will cure all. "I have no apology to make whatsoever for having spent much of my time in the last 15 years trying to alleviate the misery that's been inflicted on a lot of innocent people through no fault of their own. That is unfortunately the way political debate has been cast," he recently told the graduating class at Brandeis's Heller School of Social Work. "When we try to solve problems, we make

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mistakes. It is unfair to measure people who have decided to go and work on the most difficult and intractable and gut-wrenching problems in society—poverty, illness, racism—against those who work on easier things." Liberals have good reason to cheer Frank's arrival in Congress. He has more to offer than firm ideological convictions; he has the force of personality, the intelligence, and the wit to become a well-heeded spokesman for his beliefs.

FOR THE EIGHT YEARS preceding his election to Congress, Frank sat in the Massachusetts legislature, where he ardently supported social programs and civil rights, including gay rights legislation. In fiscal 1980 he led the successful fight for a six percent cost-of-living increase for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, over the veto of Governor Edward J. King, at a time when support of poor people was not going to win many kudos back in the district. But he also wrote legislation, with one of the most conservative members of the State House, allowing a computer match of those receiving welfare against those getting other types of state aid, to check welfare fraud. Governor King now says that this legislation saved the state $13 million last year. Frank fought for civil service reform, and was the scourge of the chronically deficit-ridden Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority. He said of the MBTA, "Never has one organization paid so much to so many to do so little." His run-ins with the MBTA's Amalgamated Transit Union made him the only Massachusetts Democratic congressman to be elected in 1980 without the endorsement of the AFL-CIO.

James Segel, head of the Massachusetts Municipal Association and a longtime friend of Frank's, says, "He was a prudent liberal. He understood if liberals are not careful about their programs, those programs will be open to attack. He was a surprisingly effective legislator for someone who was so far out on some issues. But he knew how to compromise, how to trade off. And if he took a stand on an issue, a whole group of legislators felt it was safe to be there." Richard Manley, president of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, a fiscally conservative, business-supported tax-reform organization that helped Frank draft legislation, comments: "Barney's an interesting liberal. He knew you can't provide the programs you want to provide as long as you are throwing money down the drain. He was very management oriented—death on patronage. I've never seen anyone grasp issues so quickly, and he would fight like a dog. If more liberals had taken his approach, there's no question a lot of them would not have gone down the drain."

Frank enjoys pointing out the shallowness of the terms in which much of the current political debate has been cast. "If I had lost the election, I would have written an article in favor of eliminating metaphors from political debate," he recently told the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a group headed by former Massachusetts senator Edward Brooke. "You hear about 'cutting the fat' out of programs as if it can simply be sliced off. Well, a lot of that fat is marbleized, and you have to cut flesh with it. Another popular metaphor is 'the rising tide lifts all boats.' I agree we need to stimulate the economy, but if you buy that metaphor that means that's all you have to do; it so happens that a lot of people aren't even in the boats, they're treading water."

Frank's quick wit and rapid-fire delivery were nurtured early. He is the second oldest of four children of a Bayonne, New Jersey, truck-stop owner. The family subscribed to seven newspapers, which were read and debated at the dinner table. Three of the four Franks landed in politics. Barney's sister, Ann Lewis, is the political director of the Democratic National Committee. His brother David works on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Frank's personality is an amalgam of Bayonne and Harvard, where he had a distinguished and lengthy career, both undergraduate and graduate. The combination allows him, with either condescension or snobbery, to address and understand a range of people. His own district stretches from conservative, blue-collar Fitchburg and Leominster to liberal, well-to-do Newton and Brookline. "While he has a Harvard element, he profits by having grown up in an area that was very different. He's not an effete

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intellectual who's dabbling," says Steven V. Roberts, a boyhood friend who is now a *New York Times* reporter in Washington. "Knowing average, working-class people has always been part of his orientation. It's one of the reasons he won the election. Barney's father died when he was still in college, so he took a year off to come back to Bayonne and put the business in order. My twin brother and I are a few years younger than he is, and I remember him encouraging us to apply to Harvard. My reaction was, What's Harvard? When we did apply, he had us stay in his room during our interview trip. . . . He's a caring person, not one of those liberals who cares about humanity but not individuals." John Kerry, a Boston lawyer and former antiwar activist, cites Frank's passion for politics and his ability to inspire and influence others. "His personal relationships are molded almost exclusively around his political life. His relationships tend to be political exchanges. The tremendous commitment reminds me of Al Lowenstein. They're similar in their total devotion to politics."

Through his Harvard connection, and the people he's worked for, including Boston mayor Kevin White and former representative Michael Harrington, Frank has built up an impressive number of contacts with people in public life. His press acquaintances include, in addition to Roberts, *Washington Post* publisher Donald Graham, *Post* reporter Robert Kaiser, syndicated columnist Mary McGrory, *Wall Street Journal* columnist Suzanne Garment, and the staff of *TNR*. This, in addition to his work for organizations such as Americans for Democratic Action and the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition, has given him national recognition few freshman representatives, or, for that matter, state legislators, ever get. "He might have been the best-known state legislator in the country," says Steve Roberts.

Frank assumed a near legendary status in Boston. Frustrated with the world of academia, he became Kevin White's top aide at the age of 27. According to some, he was also White's alter ego and the city's second most powerful man from 1968 to 1971, during White's first term. Frank used his prodigious memory to defend the city budget at hearings without using notes, a colleague recalls. It was a time of revitalizing the neighborhoods, rethinking the notion of ever-expanding the downtown business district, bringing professional managers and blacks into city government, introducing the concept of rent control. In those years people were talking about a possible White presidential candidacy. There has been a reevaluation of many of those initiatives since then. Frank admits that early in his career he did not pay enough attention to the needs of the free market. And though the contacts he made with the bureaucracy during those years helped him keep his State House district in good repair, Frank declined to support White for his successful run for a fourth term, largely because of White's growing megalomania during his subsequent terms in office.

Blind party loyalty is not a Frank tenet. He supported Republican Edward Brooke's bid for reelection against the eventual victor, Democrat Paul Tsongas. "Brooke had been an excellent senator, he was responsive to both the black and white communities, and had been an important voice in urban issues," Frank explains. "I am puzzled by liberals who support affirmative action in principle, but show no understanding of the role the only black senator had to play." Perhaps it is a measure of Frank's affability that Tsongas's twin sister was his press secretary in his congressional campaign.

A more serious occasion of breaking ranks occurred during Governor Michael Dukakis's bid for reelection. Frank had been disappointed with the governor's reaction to a state fiscal crisis, in which he prescribed austerity for social programs. When Dukakis requested the use of state funds allocated for June to pay April and May expenses, Frank replied with a suggestion to abolish the month of June. Frank and other liberals, thinking they would slap Dukakis's wrists, supported a liberal Cambridge councilwoman during the primary, and Dukakis lost the race to the far more conservative Edward J. King. "I've expressed my guilt on that matter many times," Frank says.

Although he says he doesn't believe in party loyalty when one's party contains no ideology, he worried equally about the kind of loyalty that Republicans (and some Democrats) are showing to the administration's proposals. "Most members are more supportive of programmatic content than members think the voters will let them be. They need some boosting," he says. "But Republicans are fearful if they don't go along, NCPAC will finance an opponent. And many Democrats are saying, 'Reagan carried my district by 70 percent. I've got to support him.' There's only so much moral force the leadership can exercise under those circumstances."

SO WHAT should the Democrats do? Frank says he left that sort of analysis behind when he gave up academia. But he has always been impatient with utopian idealists, whether they emerged from the 1960s left or the 1980s right. Above all, he can't stand the sputtering vagueness of the calls for the Democrats to do *something*. He'd like people to give some indication of what that something is. For Frank, it is doing what he loves most: cajoling, browbeating, compromising—getting actively involved in the give-and-take of the legislative process.

In a recent interview in the *Boston Globe*, Frank explained what he'd like to do in Congress: "I think I'm a better legislator than I would be anything else. . . . What I think I'm best at is mediating between people who do creative thinking about policy and politicians. We have this problem in America of translating rational policy into reality, and that's where I think I can help." He adds that he'd be happy to spend the next 30 years or so working at it.

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On the Glorious Fourth, a reaffirmation.

The Patriotism of Values

by Jack Beatty

It was the flags; they were what bothered you most about the demonstrations. From a distance the colors and the big star looked familiar—the state flag of Texas, perhaps. It was only up close that you realized they were the flags of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Vietnam. That was bad enough. But the way our own flag was treated at those demonstrations was worse. It torqued the moral tension of being there, and made it unbearable. Teenagers wore the flag on their fannies. Breasts bobbed behind it. It was ripped, it was dipped, it was dragged in the dust. It was burned. Norman Thomas, that patriotic socialist, said we shouldn't burn the flag—we should wash it instead. Few listened.

If the left misused the flag, so, in its way, did the right. A crooked president wore it on his lapel. Thuggish construction workers used its standard to clobber longhairs. Bumper stickers warned you to love it or leave it. And meanwhile, a world away, more or less innocent people were being napalmed in its name.

The flag symbolizes our unity, federal and spiritual, but in those years it became the banner of our divisions. It has had a hard time recovering, and so has patriotism generally. The stereotypes of the Vietnam era have stuck, making patriotism seem the exclusive property of the right. Liberals were told so often and so stridently that being against the war made them unpatriotic that they gave up on patriotism. "Peacenik" begat "flag-waver."

The hangover from the liberals' alienation from the rituals and regalia of patriotism is unfortunate and unnecessary. It means liberals must do without patriotic symbols in communicating their vision to their countrymen, while Ronald Reagan, with practiced sincerity, uses them to promote his. He believes that stuff, we say incredulously. Indeed he does, and that may be why he won. In our continental country and heterogeneous society, the symbolic language of patriotism is a force of singular unifying power. Liberals should think twice about continuing to forfeit their claims to it if only because it's such a potent source of political emotion.

But there are better reasons than expediency for liberals to bury the bitter memory of Vietnam and renew their claims to patriotism. For America's patriotism is unusual among the patriotisms of the world. It is a patriotism not of blood and soil but of values, and those values are liberal and humane. France would still be France without the Fifth Republic; without the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, America's very nationhood would vanish. July 14 commemorates a sanguinary and divisive victory of class over class; July 4, a declaration not only of independence and unity but of equality and liberty. American patriotism doesn't focus on a fossilized institution like the British monarchy; nor is its pantheon peopled by martyrs and murderers, as is that of the Irish. The patriotism of Mother Russia runs counter to the professed (if not the real) goals of the Soviet republic; American patriotism is in the service of, indeed is identical with, the political purpose of the American republic. It is not hard to see why it has won what has been claimed for it, "the decent opinion of mankind." The world has not improved on the values set forth in its lapidary phrases.

Patriotism is a more complex and interesting emotion than simple love of country, though it is also that; and like all genuine love, it fixes on unique particulars. Dates—December 7, November 22, the Fourth of July—evoke it in all but the most cynical hearts. So do the names of heroes—Nathan Hale, Sergeant York, Jonathan Wainwright, and General McAuliffe, who gave the Germans that all-American answer at Bastogne, "Nuts!"—and the names of places, like Valley Forge, Antietam, Belleau Wood, Bataan, and the one that evokes the most complex emotion, Gettysburg.

Lincoln fixed its meaning in eloquence for northerners, but southerners have a rhetorical monument of their own to Gettysburg. For them it was a day when a cause was lost, not sanctified, and so the passage is a dream about stopping Time before it hardens into History:

> It's all *now* you see. Yesterday wont be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago. For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are laid and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out and Pickett himself with his long oiled ringlets and his hat in one hand probably and his sword in the other looking up the hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word and its all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet, it not only hasn't begun yet but there is still time for it not to begin against that position and those circumstances which made more men than Garnett and Kemper and Armstead and Wilcox look grave yet it's going to begin, we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and

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that moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *This time. Maybe this time* with all this much to lose and all this much to gain: Pennsylvania, Maryland, the world, the golden dome of Washington itself to crown with desperate and unbelievable victory the desperate gamble, the cast made two years ago.

The voice is unmistakably Faulkner's, and the idea in it—of the past's somehow not being past and of its inviting our participation—is the metaphysic of patriotism. For the patriotic sensibility, the past is not only a focus of piety but also a source of values. It lives in conscience, memory, and symbol. The patriot reads Lincoln's hope that "these dead shall not have died in vain," as a charge upon him to give their sacrifice meaning. He cannot think back on the great harvest of death in the Civil War without reflecting on the condition of black people in this country. Their condition, whether it's called equality or justice or just plain common decency, must be the meaning and justification of the slaughter to a generation that has lost the mystique of the Union which so inspirited Lincoln. For us the sacrifices made at Gettysburg and Shiloh, Cold Harbor and the Widlerness, Vicksburg and Antietam were not in vain only if slavery and its legacy are abolished, annulled—yes, overcome.

TO BE SURE, liberals are no fonder of metaphysics than they are of looking to the past for the ground of their values. They prefer to appeal to logic or immutable principle or the rulings of nine wise men, or, as Charles Krauthammer recently reminded us, even to the findings of social science ("Science ex machina," *TNR*, June 6). They have left history to the conservatives, and the conservatives have seized the opportunity to project myths from the nation's past as an agenda for its future (a "nostalgia for the future," a friend of mine calls it). But if liberals have tended to be uneasy with appeals to the past, if they have looked on our history as a predacious frenzy punctuated by moments of progressive reform, a bunk on which they would never lay their heads, they have rejected outright the other element of patriotic feeling which Faulkner conveys in that passage: its intimate association with battles and bloodshed.

This repugnance is an instinct of decency. But it also betrays a philosophical shallowness. Liberals believe that history should behave itself, that it can be managed rationally; and wars, even victorious ones, are always a lamentable lapse from reason. But in other respects the butterfly that flutters in the liberal stomach at the memory of war is an ironic creature indeed. Most of our wars were fought by progressive presidents and for genuinely liberal and humane goals. (The Mexican War, Lincoln's opposition to which cost him his seat in Congress, was the only important exception.) The Vietnam War too was fought in the name of humane values like self-determination and democracy, even if some of its planners saw it more coldly as a move in a geopolitical chess game, first with the Chinese and then with the Russians. But since the war could not have been won without utterly sacrificing its ostensible aims—"We had to destroy this village in order to save it"—it took on the repellent face of hypocrisy. The great error of the left was to take out its anger at the war on the patriotic symbols that cloaked it.

YET BEYOND THE AURA of the deplorable that surrounds the subject of war in liberal eyes, it is easy to see why it is logical for patriotic feeling to batten on battle and bloodshed, once sanitized by pious memory. In war, ordinary people make history. Tolstoy compares battle to a vast triangle, with Napoleon at the apex and the 1812 version of G.I. Joe at the base; the closer you are to the base, where the fighting is, the more important you are to the outcome of the battle. It may be bad military history, but it is a superb figure for the crucial participation of common folk in the grand occasions of their nations. To borrow a phrase from Norman Mailer, in war Everyman gets his hands on the rump of history, and it's not an experience he soon forgets.

But if the memory of wartime service exalts the little man to the status of maker of history, however small his contribution, it also reminds him that he is not the master of his fate; his country is. The jejune Jesuit may boast that he contains Ireland, but war is a rude reminder that it's the other way around: our countries contain us, and when their blood is up they can dispose of us. Part of the emotion of patriotism is awe at the total power our countries have over us. In the age of total war, dreams of escape, aesthetic or libertarian fantasies about building one's own world or making a separate peace are sheer bravado. For we are neither autonomous individuals nor citizens of the world; we are in the grip of states.

But this is the Fourth of July, not an anarchist pep rally; and if part of the emotion of patriotism is fear at the nation's unbounded power over us, that's only a part. The other side is the rapture of melting into the powerful mass. Most of the patriotic feeling that feeds on the memory of war has to do with comradeship and

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solidarity and sacrifice. War is not good for liberty, or for tolerance, or for the health of young men. But it provides an unmatched occasion for the expression of collective emotion and commitment. The social contract is enacted in war; the general will is made flesh. The patriotic feeling that clings to the memory of war is a longing for a perfect citizenship.

My authority for that last judgment is the president of these United States. He equates wartime patriotism with citizenship in one of the stories he likes to tell in place of giving facts and reasons. It's the one about the bomber shot down over the English Channel. Most of the crew bails out, except a young tailgunner who is too badly hurt to jump. So the captain says, "That's all right, son. We'll just ride this one down together"; and together they plummet into the sea. The president proposes the captain as an ideal citizen, the sort of fellow we'll see more of now that the government is off our backs. But there's an irony here. The president's policies appeal to selfishness, now called by its confirmation name: Incentive. That captain was no supply-sider. Nor was he a man to bandy cost-benefit analyses. He came out of a world where citizenship meant you had to look out for the other fellow, because you could be sure he'd look after you. His heroism grew out of a specific kind of social morale which everything in the Reagan program—the denial of social responsibility, the attack on the very idea of government, the emphasis on money rather than shared sacrifice as the key to national security, the exalting of pecuniary ambition as the salvation of the Republic—would destroy.

IT IS EXACTLY HERE that liberals can make their fresh appeal to patriotic feeling. They must become the sponsors of a revived ideal of citizenship. They have long been the champions of rights (yours, mine, and the pornographers); now it is time to speak up for obligations. The liberal philosophy has long exalted privatism; now Reagan has topped it in that line, letting school kids go hungry so that the Galahad of the supply-side world, the Investor, will sleep better knowing that the government's budget is tight. It is now for liberals to urge a revival of the public realm and the public virtues.

Still, before we get more citizens like that captain, we will have to survive a regime whose motto ought to be: "Ask not what you can do for your country, ask what you can do for youself." It will damage—is already damaging—the country's social spirit. To heal the damage, and to draw upon the energy of the now neglected communitarian side of American patriotism, liberals should champion policies and institutions that would at once create the hope of a new citizen and the social machinery that might produce him. Three examples of the direction such thinking might take are an incomes policy, a draft, and a national energy policy.

By urging the adoption of a national incomes policy that would tie wage increases to increases in productivity, liberals would be doing more than framing a clear alternative to the Reagan program of taking from the poor to give to the rich in the hope that the rich will devote some of their largess to creating jobs for the poor; they would be educating the public to the necessity for interdependence and social discipline in the fight against inflation. A second institution for liberals to advocate is the draft—not the "selective service" of the 1950s and 1960s, but a program of mandatory national service, military or civilian, with no exemptions or deferments allowed. Much has been said in this magazine about why the draft makes sense from a national security standpoint, but at least as important is the fillip it would give to national thinking and feeling. You'd have to make the country a part of your plans, young man (and young woman). A third avenue of liberal patriotism would be a national energy policy that would force us to think like Americans, and that might even become the focus of a robust nationalism, since it would be aimed at ending our degrading thralldom to foreign (and multinational) oil.

BUT SPECIFIC POLICIES don't matter nearly so much as the spirit, the vision, informing them. It must be a patriotic spirit, a truly national vision. In foreign and domestic policy alike, the Republicans have shown that they are the spokesmen for the narrowest corporate interest; so liberals must now shake off their addiction to the rhetoric of faction—with a reference to labor, blacks, women, gays, pot smokers, and whale lovers in every speech—and speak and stand for the whole, for the nation.

Who are the potential constituents of such a politics of patriotism, a politics of the whole? Among others, they are alienated, unchurched, post-ethnic, post-party Americans who have lost the old adhesions and hunger for new ones: people whom liberal society has liberated into loneliness. Their name is legion; the lonely crowd may be the real American majority.

But questions swarm as thick as mosquitoes at a Fourth of July picnic; while you're swatting one, another is bunging you in the ear. How can liberal politics cure what liberal society, with its hero, the liberated self, has created? And why should this self, free at last from ties to tribe and fetters to faith, want to forge new connections to his fellow citizens? And how can you have the moral equivalent of wartime citizenship without having a war? Oh, there are plenty of questions, and the future is going to have its hands full answering them. And who knows? Perhaps the mystique of the Union, the idea of the whole which once animated thousands to give the last full measure of devotion, may once again motivate and inspire. Stranger things have happened. Lincoln appeared when he did as if by providential plan, and from here FDR looks like a miracle too. So, let's sing the Union forever, hurrah boys, hurrah, and rally 'round the flag. Liberals are Americans too, and patriotism shouldn't be their last refuge.

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The theory of tyranny, the tyranny of theory.

Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism

by Michael Walzer

Every political theorist hopes that his concepts and distinctions will turn, magically, into common currency, so that men and women on the street will talk exactly as he does. And he fears at the same time that his work will be distorted, corrupted, appropriated for partisan uses over which he has no control. Most of the theorists who first worked out the concept of totalitarianism in the late 1940s and the early 1950s lived to see both their hopes and fears fully realized. "Totalitarian" quickly became a cold war tag, our everyday name for the Communist regimes of the East. By contrast, we described ourselves and our allies in those innocent days with words like "free" and "liberal"; our governments were "constitutionalist." The struggle had this form: the free world against communism, limited government against totalitarianism—a fantasy version of what political theory is all about.

Today we are too sophisticated for such simple distinctions, or too cynical. We know that the free world includes a large number of brutal and repressive regimes. These are "our" dictatorships, many of which, to the naked eye, don't look all that different from "theirs." But the new cold warriors of the 1980s want to draw the line exactly as it was drawn in the 1950s. So they have dug deeper into the original theory, looking for richer conceptual plunder. And indeed, as the theory was worked out by writers like Hannah Arendt and Carl Friedrich, totalitarianism was not contrasted with freedom. There was, after all, nothing new about unfree government. Most states through most of human history have been unfree; most still are. Totalitarianism was a radically new kind of unfreedom, a new species of the genus "tyrannus," different from all the others. This was the difference on which the theorists focused their attention, and it played a part too in political debates among small groups of leftist intellectuals struggling to understand Stalinist terror. But it was a difference largely ignored in the official ideology of the cold war.

Now, however, it has been taken up by the new cold war ideologists, led, for the moment, by our representative to the United Nations. Yes, they say, many of our allies are tyrants and always have been. But these are ordinary, old-fashioned tyrants. The real enemy, the present danger, is totalitarianism, that is, communism. And for the sake of the struggle against communism, we must make our peace with tyranny. Authoritarian regimes in South Korea or Guatemala or Argentina are not so bad when compared with Russia or North Vietnam or Cuba. (China, with which, it appears, we must also make our peace, tends to get overlooked in these discussions.) We must not allow moralistic qualms about routine oppression—the tyrants ye always have with you—to get in the way of our outrage at what is truly new and truly dangerous. Compared to the cold war rhetoric of the 1950s, this sort of talk represents, I suppose, a more sophisticated appropriation of the original theory. It is not, however, a less corrupt one.

The original theory still has genuine value. Totalitarianism is indeed a new kind of tyranny, not entirely without precedent in the long history of tyranny, but new nonetheless. Partly its novelty consists in nothing more than a radical improvement in bureaucratic and police control, the introduction of a more advanced technology of surveillance: old tyranny with new machinery. One of the most frightening features of Orwell's *1984* was the two-way television screen. But machines are of little use without the will to use them, and what is most novel and most important about totalitarianism is the peculiarly modern ambition of its leaders: to control everything, to wipe out not merely opposition, but every form of difference, recalcitrance, hesitation, private doubt, and caution, to create an entirely new order and even a new kind of human being. Hence the need to penetrate every aspect of social life, religion, culture, and family, to seize every secondary association, to supervise all communication between persons, all movement between places, all thought and all feeling. Older tyrannies were marked by a more limited ambition. Their leaders wanted simply to stay in power, to enjoy the fruits of power for as long as possible. They were a danger to rivals and opponents, but private life, traditional routines, passive minorities were generally (not always) safe from their interventions.

That is the key distinction and it remains, to my mind, a useful guide to 20th-century politics. But it can't just be applied mechanically, dividing the world, for totalitarianism is an "ideal type," a picture of horrifying perfection never quite achieved in fact, while authoritarianism is a catchall category. The idea of totality bears the marks of its discovery in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust and in the last years of Stalin's personal rule. The concentration camp, Hannah Arendt wrote, is the model of totalitarian control. The Hitler and Stalin regimes come as close as regimes have ever come to realizing that model, but

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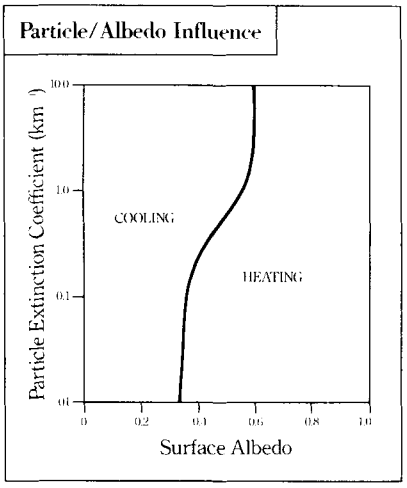
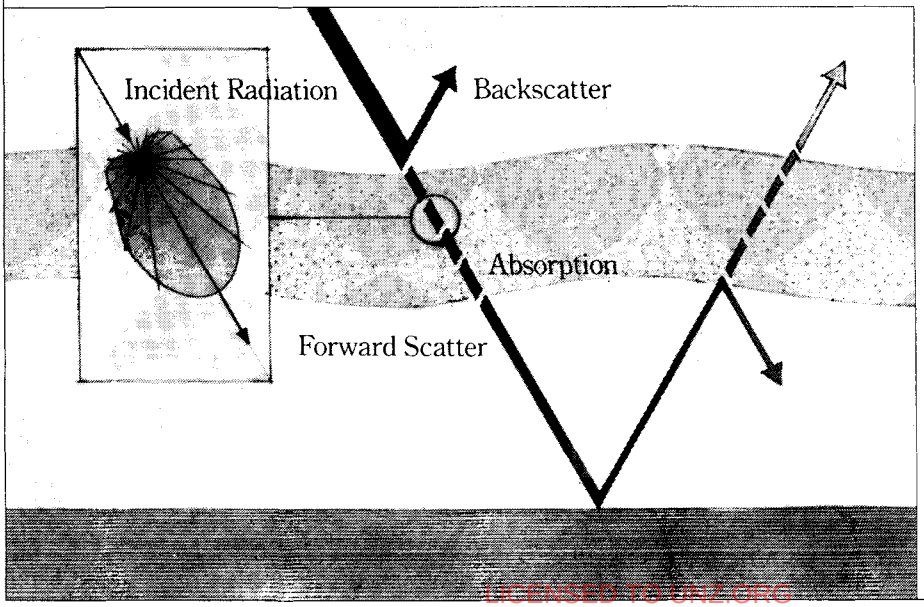
The Albedo Effect

Mathematical models of the atmosphere are the chief scientific tools for predicting long-term climate and identifying possible climatic changes that may result from man's activities. Recent advances at the General Motors Research Laboratories have revealed new information about the contribution of airborne particles to the delicate thermal balance of the earth's atmosphere.



Regions of heating and cooling determined by particle characteristics and surface albedo.



Radiation scattering exhibited by a layer of particles. The inset shows the distribution of scattering by a single particle of mean size.

DEVOID of its atmosphere, the bare earth would reach an average temperature of only −1°C. Atmospheric interaction with solar and terrestrial radiation raises the average surface temperature to fifteen degrees Celsius, making life as we know it possible. Small fluctuations in overall temperature can have large-scale effects. It is believed that a drop of a few degrees Celsius lasting for a period as short as four years could trigger an ice age. Fundamental studies conducted at the General Motors Research Laboratories explore the effect of various atmospheric factors, natural and man-made, on the earth's thermal balance.

New knowledge of the influence of airborne particles on the earth's thermal balance has been revealed by investigations carried out by Dr. Ruth Reck. Dr. Reck's work at General Motors integrated for the first time the complex factor of particles into radiative-convective atmospheric models. Her findings help determine under what conditions particles have a cooling influence, and under what conditions they have a heating influence.

Airborne particles have many sources: volcanic issue, wind-raised dust and sea salt, ash, soot, direct and indirect products of combustion and industrial processing, the products of the decay of plant and animal life, the liquid droplets and ice crystals that make up clouds. Particles alter the radiation flow in the atmosphere by the processes of scattering and absorption. Particles differ by size and composition, factors which determine optical properties.

Prior to Dr. Reck's work, models for calculating the vertical temperature profile included layers of clouds and the significant gases—O_2, O_3, H_2O and CO_2—but neglected the particle factor. To establish the thermal effect of particles, later models assumed a uniform vertical temperature change.

Dr. Reck's contribution was to add the particle factor to a one-dimensional model developed at the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory at Princeton University. This model divides the atmosphere into nine layers. An initial temperature distribution is assumed, and the model is used to compute the net radiative energy

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flow into or out of each layer. A particle population is input for each layer. Calculated radiation imbalances result in a temperature change for each layer within the model, subject to the condition that change in temperature with altitude not exceed the adiabatic lapse rate. The new temperatures are used to compute a new radiation balance. This process is repeated until there are no further changes in temperature.

The particles of interest, known as Mie-scattering aerosols, are comparable in size to the wavelength of the incident radiation. Dr. Reck models the interaction of these particles with the radiation field in terms of two parameters: the single scattering albedo of the particle, which describes backscatter, and an anisotropic scattering factor, which measures the degree of forward scatter. From these two quantities and the size distribution and abundance of the particles, the transmission, absorption and backscatter of each layer in the model can be calculated.

DR. RECK discovered that whether particles have a heating or cooling influence depends upon the surface albedo, or reflective power, of the earth directly beneath them. Snow (0.6) is more reflective than sand (0.3); water is less reflective than either (0.07). Her results indicate that when surface albedo is small, the net effect of particles is to "shield" the earth from incoming solar radiation, producing a cooling influence. When surface albedo is large, a trapping effect prevails, in which the portion of solar radiation that reaches the earth's surface is "trapped" between the surface and the particles, producing a net heating influence. The competition between these two effects, shielding and trapping, determines the overall thermal influence of particles.

Dr. Reck calculated that for the latitudes between the equator and 35°N, where average surface albedo is low, the current background level of atmospheric particles decreases solar radiation reaching the earth by ~1%, thus producing a net cooling effect. Her findings indicate that heating takes place at latitudes north of 55°N, where average surface albedo is high. Calculations with the model indicate a correlation between the increase in particle abundance due to volcanic activity in 1970 and a subsequent ice build-up in 1971.

"Previous models did not adequately take into account the role played by particles in the earth's thermal balance," says Dr. Reck. "The geosystem is continually changing. It is important for us to understand the elements that affect this evolution, so that we may know how man's activities influence the atmosphere."

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE WORK

Dr. Ruth Reck is a Staff Research Scientist in the Physics Department at the General Motors Research Laboratories.

Dr. Reck received her Ph.D in physical chemistry from the University of Minnesota. Her thesis, on the statistical mechanics of heterogeneous systems, concerned the theory of diffusion-controlled chemical reactions. Prior to joining General Motors in 1965, she was a Research Associate in the Applied Mathematics Department of Brown University.

In addition to global climate studies, Dr. Reck has done research at General Motors in solid state physics and magnetic materials. Over the last seven years, she has participated in several international exchange programs on climate-related subjects.

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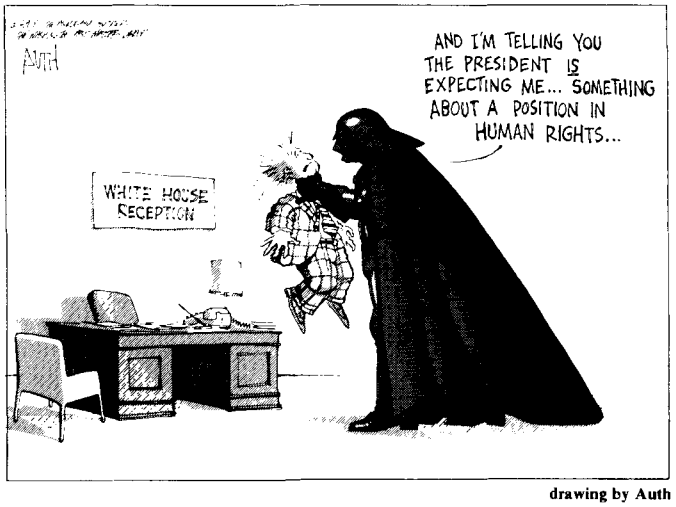
even they realized it for some, not for all, of their subjects. And if we set aside the Soviet Union, where Stalinism remains today a regime-in-reserve, it is clear that all the other examples of post-World War II Communist and fascist governments are failed totalitarianisms. They don't measure up to Arendt's standard, they fall short of Orwell's brilliant science fiction, their terror isn't total. Between these regimes and other sorts of tyranny it isn't easy to draw a sharp line. And it is sheer willfulness, ideological relentlessness, to insist that this line, once it is worked out, will conform to the cold war division between East and West.

CONSIDER NOW the two major moral/political arguments of the new cold warriors. I'll take them from Jeane Kirkpatrick's *Commentary* article ("Dictatorships and Double Standards," November 1979), a particularly good example of contemporary ideology, even if it isn't, or just because it isn't, a particularly good article. The first of these is an argument about political possibility. Communist totalitarianism brings with it a long, dark night. "There is no instance of a revolutionary 'socialist' or Communist society being democraticized," writes Kirkpatrick. Our own tyrants, by contrast, are sometimes replaced by democratic regimes—though it is always important for the stability of the new democracy that the replacement take place *very slowly*. Kirkpatrick doesn't discuss what might be called the reverse replacement rate. In fact, I'm afraid, the decline of democracy in the free world is rather more noticeable than its slow advance. In any case, this is a false distinction. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland probably would be democratic states today were it not for the Red Army. The Red Army is a threat to human freedom, but communism, in these states at least, is an ugly but not a powerful political system. There is nothing in its internal mechanics that rules out a democratic transformation. Assuming that the Russians don't intervene—an unlikely but analytically necessary assumption—the prospects for democracy are probably better, certainly no worse, in much of Eastern Europe than, to cite some of Kirkpatrick's odder examples, in Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, and Zaire. In all these cases, social structure and political culture are far more important than the current regime in shaping the long-term evolution.



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The second argument is about relative brutality. Old-fashioned tyrannies, according to Kirkpatrick, because they don't set out to transform their societies, do much less damage to them. They tolerate existing patterns of misery and injustice, but at least they don't create new ones. And their subjects are accustomed to the old patterns, have long ago adjusted to them and learned how to survive. Hence "such societies create no refugees." This is the "damning contrast" between Communist regimes and "other autocracies." The massive refugee population of the modern world is largely a creation of Communist totalitarianism. It would be nice—not for the refugees but for the ideological peace of mind of the rest of us—if this were true. But it isn't true. The refugees who fled Hungary in 1956 or Afghanistan in 1980 were fleeing the Red Army, not domestic oppression. The million Cubans who have reached our shores since the 1960s probably could be matched by a million Haitians, were the latter given a comparable welcome. And the largest single group of refugees since World War II was produced by Pakistani repression in East Bengal, which was nothing if not old-fashioned. Certainly there are Communist states that fit Kirkpatrick's account. East Germany and Cambodia are different but equally clear-cut examples. But the line she draws is a fabrication.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN totalitarian and authoritarian regimes is a conceptual contrast, not a practical one. It doesn't conform to, nor does it justify, our actual alliances. It doesn't make Kissinger's Pakistani "tilt" of 1971 smell any better. It doesn't rule out economic (or even military) cooperation with Communist China. One can't pull politics or morality out of a theoretical hat. That sort of thing is always a trick. Theory, *once we have it right*, does nothing more than shape our perceptions, guide our understanding; within the framework it provides, choices still have to be made.

The hardest choice, and the one for the sake of which the new cold war ideology has been worked out, is simply this: an authoritarian regime, old-fashioned, brutal, repressive, allied to the West, is threatened by a revolutionary movement some of whose leaders have totalitarian ambitions and/or Russian connections. What should we do? The claim of the new cold warriors is that the liberal impulse in all such cases is to support the revolutionaries or at least to desert at the first opportunity the authoritarian regime. And what they want instead is the opposite policy, a steadfast commitment to the regime, because totalitarianism is the greater danger, the irreversible transformation, and so on.

But this is to turn policy into a reflex of ideology (disguised as theory). There just isn't going to be one answer in cases like the one I've described, and to act as

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if there is one answer—we get it right or wrong, we win or lose—is the beginning of political disaster. Often we can't do anything at all. Or rather, our choice is the same choice that the Russians have faced again and again in Eastern Europe: send in the troops or let the local conflict take its course. But let's assume that there is room, some limited room, for political maneuver (economic aid, military supply, diplomatic pressure, and so on). Then, obviously, the direction of our maneuvers will have to be determined by the shape of the terrain. How much popular support does the regime have? How much capacity for change? Who are the rebels and what is their "cause"? What sorts of alliances have they already made and how stable are those alliances? What are our own strategic interests in the area? That last question is generally taken to mean we should align ourselves with the established regime. In fact, however, if there really are strategic interests, and if we take them seriously, then it would seem to follow that we should line up as early as possible with the side most likely to win, so long as there is a real chance of keeping the winners out of the Russian camp. It is characteristic of the new cold warriors that they would support authoritarian governments both when it is in our interests to do so and also when it isn't—so that one is led to suspect that they just support authoritarian governments. In any case, there probably are such governments that we ought on balance to help. Otherwise, we could hardly have any relations at all with third world states. And there probably are oppositionists and revolutionaries whom we ought on balance to help too.

RARELY, HOWEVER, in any part of the third world, are there going to be old or new regimes, governments, or movements to which we should be ideologically committed. We don't have to become apologists for the internal policies of our allies. What we owe them at most is critical support. Foreign policy is always a double business: we have to pursue our interests and we have to defend our values. In the long run, we hope that these two efforts come together, but at any given moment there are conflicts and contradictions. Maybe it is in our interest to support, say, the present South Korean regime. But we must also, for the sake of our values, maintain some critical distance from it. And that kind of argument doesn't work only for right-wing regimes. After 1960, it was in our interest that Cuban communism develop in, say, a Yugoslav rather than a Bulgarian direction, and we might have accomplished that, or at least assisted in it, through some sort of economic cooperation. But cooperation would have been no excuse for a failure to criticize Castro's dictatorship, the repression of dissidents, the campaign against homosexuals, and so on.

A policy of this kind assumes that there is no long, dark night, no thousand-year Reich, no totalitarian transformation that is proof against political opposition and social change. That has to be, I think, the working assumption of any sane diplomacy. The new cold warriors exploit what we might think of as the apocalyptic features of the theory of totalitarianism. And in the 20th century it is difficult to avoid some engagement with, some hard contemplation of, apocalypse. In political terms that means that there have been and will be again regimes so evil that the only moral stand one can adopt toward them is absolute opposition. But what policies follow from that moral stand? Surely Stalin's was one such regime, and yet we fought with Stalin against the Nazis. Even evil has its degrees. We must hope—we can reasonably believe—that it also has its duration.

IN THE THIRD WORLD, at any rate, there is not likely to be much permanence—no sustained development toward modernity and liberty, but also very few stable or solidly established tyrannies. No doubt many of the tyrants will have totalitarian ambitions; the rhetoric of revolution is now the *lingua franca* of the third world. But that only means that there will be many failed totalitarianisms. Whether these failures will be bloodier than the "other autocracies" is a question unlikely to find a yes or no answer. Some of them will and some won't. For our part, we can and should maintain a steady hostility toward every sort of totalitarian ambition. But that is no reason for supporting the "other autocracies" or excusing their bloodiness. We can make the alliances we have to make on both sides of this shadowy line, and we can condemn when we must the internal policies of our allies. I understand, of course, that there are serious diplomatic difficulties involved in any such policy—much discussed and never overcome during the Carter years. But it is a worse policy to refuse altogether to confront those difficulties. The real danger, *the present danger*, of the new cold war ideology is that it will drive us into alliances that our material defense does not require and rule out the outspokenness that the defense of our values does require. And all this for the sake of a misunderstood and badly applied political theory!

But perhaps I overestimate the power of theory (it is a common professional mistake). One might detect among contemporary cold warriors a sneaking sympathy for "traditional autocrats [who] leave in place existing allocations of wealth, power, status, and other resources. . . ." On the far left, there is often similar sympathy for revolutionaries who upset those allocations, even if they do so only in order to establish a new tyranny—and this view, too, has its theoretical rationale. But I would propose a different sympathy: for the tortured dissidents, the imprisoned oppositionists, the threatened minorities, all the "disappeared" and murdered men and women of all the tyrannies, old and new. And we don't need a political theory to explain why we should keep these people always in the forefront of our consciousness, their names on the tip of our tongues.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Old Ark, New Covenant

Even before you see *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, after you've read the ads and gotten some sense of the reviews, you know that the picture is offering you a pact: you agree to be a kid again, in return for which *Raiders* will give you old-time movie thrills expressed in slick modern cinematic terms.

No, thanks.

I won't pretend that I got no thrills or tingly laughs out of *Raiders*, but the more it happened, the more it irritated me. (Bernard Shaw said it happened to him when he found himself laughing at certain comedies.) *Raiders*, as bruited, *is* the Saturday-afternoon serial in excelsis. It was directed by Steven Spielberg (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*), and one of the executive producers and authors was George Lucas (*Star Wars*)—two of the brightest young successes in Hollywood. But the more spectacular the sweep, the more stunning the special effects, the more ingenious the editing, the more my irritation grew until it toppled over into depression.

A word about the plot, for the topography of my comments. *Raiders* is set in 1936. The hero is an American archaeology professor, Harrison Ford, whom we first meet in a South American jungle, pillaging a temple full of booby traps and blowguns, just escaping with his life. Then, after an unconsciously droll academic interlude back home, he is commissioned by US secret agents to keep the Germans from recovering the Lost Ark. This ark, said to contain the original fragmented tablets of the Ten Commandments, is buried in Egypt where the Germans are now digging under the guidance of a ratty French archaeologist. (One of the several dozen rational questions that it's idle to ask: why did Egypt admit detachments of German troops and armored vehicles?) The US must keep the ark out of Hitler's hands, for prestige reasons and because Hitler believes in the power of the occult. Our hero sets off, and en route—in one of the coincidences that are the film's best features, that keep it on the edge of spoof—he meets an old girl friend, Karen Allen, in Nepal. We first see her drinking a Nepalese giant under the table in the tavern that she owns. Germans are tailing our hero, and as Allen joins Ford, the bad guys now chase the two of them to Egypt.

The action in Egypt is so febrile that, if there were not some gags included, the pace itself would be funny. In the sequence just before the finish, the bad guys seize the ark, which arouses the ire of Jehovah in ways that only His prophets Spielberg and Lucas could envision. At the end, when the Lord's ark is in the right hands—ours, of course—the US government assures Ford that the contents will be carefully investigated; then we see the crate being wheeled away into the anonymity of an immense warehouse. This last high shot is presumably meant to suggest the last shot of *Citizen Kane* except that this "Rosebud" is not being destroyed: it's available for sequels, which will doubtless be forthcoming. (And fifthcoming, sixthcoming. . . .)

Raiders is totally different in intent from *Close Encounters*, a film that in its original—and, I hope, preserved—version was moving and important. From its start, the earlier film, despite some strained domestic sitcom sequences, built the credibility of an approaching cosmic mystery. The last 40 minutes were, I thought and still think, an event in the history of faith, not so much faith in the creatures of outer space as in the means by which they were presented. Spielberg, then 30, a product of what some call the post-literate age, was demonstrating (to quote myself) that "the way to faith seems to be through the transsubstantiation of the 12-track Panavision film." We made the technology that was making the answers to our questions.

Spielberg is still an immersed cinema zealot, but now he is using his zeal on the *subjects* of old films in which he was immersed. (I'm omitting discussion of *1941*, his intervening film, which was just an arrogant joke that went wrong and long.) Here are some of the points that depress me, ultimately, about this change:

Implied limitations. Spielberg seems to imply that to be at ease in film Zion, to love film, one must be a film buff, a movie fan. Ingmar Bergman once said that he makes a film with full consciousness that it will be shown on a screen that showed a Western the week before and will show a romance the week following, and that he likes this situation. But that isn't a matter of worship, it's a recognition of lexical community and common humanity: it's not to *make* Westerns and romances. Spielberg heads straight for the bottom of the film pyramid, as if that were where the truest cinema lies, rather than in applying cinematic post-literacy to contemporary society and using the new language for the new world.

Nostalgia. The future is the past—spiffed up with the latest technology. I've commented often on the nostalgia of the film world, its worship of the high Hollywood days, its seeping belief that the

Films Worth Seeing

Bustin' Loose. A set of sketches on a theme, but they're designed to star Richard Pryor. That's enough.

Café Express. Like one of those nice 1960s Italian little-man comedies, neat, plausible, warm. Nino Manfredi at his best.

The Four Seasons. TV sitcom has never been better, chiefly because Alan Alda, who wrote and directed, got fine vernacular comic playing from five colleagues and himself.

Richard's Things. Liv Ullmann and an excellent newcomer named Amanda Redman play beautifully as a widow and the dead man's mistress who become lovers. This English film ends flaccidly but has good texture.

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best has already been. If that studio work had strict limitations, it also had securities. (Truffaut once said that he would like to have been a studio contract director in the old days, to be handed three or four scripts a year with nothing to worry about but the making of the films.) *Raiders* is an eloquent testimony of faith in pastness. The fact that it's set in 1936, that the hero can wear corny 1930s fedoras, that we can see 1936 automobiles and airplanes and old-fashioned unpsychologized villainies—all this underscores a feeling that Spielberg is one more Miniver Cheevy, born (he believes) too late. His ideal, I suppose, is to have been born around 1905 but to have had his present cameras and film stock and Dolby stereo. None of this is as much regard for the past as it is refuge from the present. Nostalgia used to be characteristic of older people; now there are probably more youthful nostalgia addicts than ever before in history.

Innocence. The nostalgia in *Raiders* is coupled with innocence. (If that's the right verb.) This, I'd guess, is the influence of George Lucas. One of the most distasteful aspects of *Star Wars* was its assumption that life is better before sex intrudes. Remember how Carrie Fisher looked? She helped to keep *Star Wars* sexless, back in that part of our lives when we could really have good clean fun, ray guns, killing without consequences, and so on. One of John Updike's characters says that in America a man is a failed boy. The only significant error in that remark is that, to judge by the international success of *Star Wars*, it's no longer an American monopoly. What's wanted is, not all that nasty growing up but physical-yet-sexless games in which only bad people die.

What's depressing me most in all this is the future. I mourn no lost paradise of film. I know that, in a good year, 95 percent of the world's films were trash, four percent plus were good entertainment, and there was a small fraction of seriously good films. In a good year. But that small fraction seems to be shrinking. Economic and cultural conditions all conduce to shrink it. What's grim in the film world, as *Raiders* attests, certainly in the US and gradually becoming so elsewhere, is that the stringency of filmmaking conditions is making the talents with the best possibilities *want* to revel in the movie-ness of the past. Yeats worried that "The best lack all conviction, while the worst/Are full of passionate intensity." But Spielberg and Lucas, as far as ability goes, are among our best, and they are full of passionate intensity.

I don't want to be a child again, not even for two hours. I reject the *Raiders* pact.

Robert Brustein on theater

Mopping Up

The 1980-81 theater season has been so lacking in distinction that it cannot even be classified as memorably bad; its character reflects the times we live in—cautiously conservative, meretriciously self-confident, smooth and cheerful, lacking aspiration or risk. In the tradition of President Harding declaring a period of normalcy, President Reagan recently exhorted us to put an end to our self-doubt. The Broadway theater, always prepared to reinforce an upbeat spirit, responded with the 35th annual Tony Award ceremonies. The declared purpose of these festive rites was social, to celebrate the achievement of women in the theater. Its real purpose, as usual, was financial: to stimulate the box office through a public display of self-celebration.

In support of the ostensible theme, however, the Tony producers trotted out a parade of female presenters to testify about how well the sex was doing and how far it still had to go. Ntozake Shange arrived on stage, wearing tree branches in her hair and a diamond in her nose, to announce the encouraging news that there were "probably more women playwrights today than 25 years ago," while Marjorie Kellogg—prior to naming the four male nominees in her field—tried to dispute the assumption that scenic design is a male-dominated profession (the embarrassed winner, John Bury, thereupon expressed his sorrow that he had not been born a woman). Women have made genuine achievements in theater—not, however, on Broadway where, to judge only by this particular spectacular, their advances have been limited to the field of cosmetics. Most of the presenters, for example, seemed to have discovered a process that substitutes various flavors of spun sugar for hair, Ellen Burstyn sporting an appetizing raspberry mixture and Helen Hayes, Patricia Neal, and Beatrice Arthur all displaying delectable silver snow. Ann Miller came on with a formidable red mouth and eyes painted a deep shade of lavender, while Patricia Lopez, singing "What I Did For Love," revealed to the camera a white-coated tongue, either a breakthrough in make-up or a signal that what she did for love was to chew too many pre-show Amitones.

DESPITE the general rejoicing, however, there was precious little to celebrate this year, aside from the box office statistics. Most of the awards for non-musical drama went to the English—Jane Lapotaire for her performance in *Piaf*, and Ian McKellen, John Bury, Peter Hall, and Peter Shaffer for respectively acting, designing, directing, and writing *Amadeus*. The awards to musicals suggested they were written for arthritic audiences looking for nostalgia cures. Broadway has traditionally been suspicious of anything that cannot be sung and danced. Its heart belongs to musical comedy—"the most beautiful words in the English language," as Jerry Orbach apostrophized the form in a selection from *42nd Street*, to tumultuous applause from the glittering Tony audience. But Broadway musicals usually have been able to generate some innovation and excitement. This year it was difficult to understand why *Pirates of Penzance* was treated as a revival while such rehashes as *42nd Street* and *Woman of the Year*, both based on Hollywood movies three and four decades old, were eligible in the category of new works (the other nominee, *Sophisticated Ladies*, seemed to be a reworking of *Blackbirds of 1932*). The best new musical, as some commentators have noted, was probably Lena Horne's one-woman show, unaccountably ineligible for the prize, though Miss Horne was given a special award, along with the opportunity to say, "Sometimes you have to wait 50 years. . . . I'm so happy I'm getting all these flowers before I lose my teeth."

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As usual, there was little recognition of the fact that theater existed beyond Broadway, despite the curious statistic that not one of the nominated works in the non-musical category had originated on the New York commercial stage. Meryl Streep, badly betrayed by a subversive teleprompter, tried to introduce an award to the Trinity Square Repertory ("the most successful regional theater of the year") and a bewildered Adrian Hall accepted, stammering his thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts in a way that suggested his discomfort at finding himself on this stage at all. It was the first time the Tony committee had noticed a resident theater which did not send shows to Broadway and it was the first time such an award was made in front of the cameras and a viewing audience (the Long Wharf received a similar Tony some years ago before the television program began, in tandem with an award to the makers of the "I Love New York" commercial). Still, the resident theater movement ought to be able to recognize tokenism by now, and so should the women whose "advances" were being celebrated in a ceremony which showed them functioning primarily as costume designers and overpainted star personalities.

I did detect one salutary change in this year's Tony session: it featured people who currently work in the theater. In the past, Alexander Cohen has been so eager to cast his program with recognizable celebrities that he trundled before the cameras any Hollywood or TV figure who ever earned an Equity card for playing a walk-on in summer stock (this pool-side luminary invariably then paid tearful tribute to the glories of a stage he probably had not revisited in 25 years). Now that Broadway has learned the advantage of populating its musicals and revivals with aging movie stars, it is once again capable of providing its own kind of glamor, along with stage tributes that at least seem more authentic. Lauren Bacall—with hooded eyes and the teeth of a shark—was present, for example, to sing "I'm one of the girls who's one of the boys" from *Woman of the Year*, and so was Elizabeth Taylor, fresh from *The Little Foxes*, providing the least artificial, most impulsive scene in this manufactured evening when she stumbled over the names of the producers being nominated, and fell to giggling on camera (she admitted that she always had a hard time reading). Miss Taylor's willingness to permit a moment of natural behavior to penetrate past the paint and decolletage was in refreshing contrast to her introduction, when the entire audience rose to its feet in fealty to what was obviously considered some special form of royalty (it was with obvious effort that the women refrained from curtsying).

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RECENT off-Broadway offerings confirm some of the trends suggested by the Tony Awards. The most significant new play has been imported from England, and the most popular American work is a musical. Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine* (Theatre de Lys) has much to recommend it, particularly the playwright's capacity to create an incisive social-political context through metaphors of imperial decay, and a moral context through the device of sexual role-changing. The play is divided into two acts, the first taking place in some archetypal colonial country in the 19th century, the second in contemporary London. Historically, 100 years have passed, but the characters have aged only 25. A more interesting development from act to act is the way the performers playing the members of the family exchange parts so that, for example, the male actor who impersonated the mother is now playing the son's homosexual lover, and the female actor who impersonated the son is now playing the daughter (an inanimate doll in Act I). The fact that men do the women's parts, and women the men's, suggests how sexual distinctions are being obliterated not just in the theater but in society itself. Miss Churchill experiments with every possible erotic combination, including lesbian love between mother and maid, incest between father and daughter, and homosexuality between father's friend and his son.

There is a purpose beyond all this playfulness which is especially cogent in the first act. It is an expression of the closet sexuality that existed in British life behind the facade of colonial respectability—the soft palate, as it were, above the stiff upper lip. While father eulogizes Queen and country, his best friend is pawing at his wife's breasts, his son is fumbling at his friend's crotch, and his faithful servent is loading his musket in preparation for a general massacre. The scene fades behind a bullet-ridden Union Jack, having realized the annihilation of colonialism imagined by Genet in *The Blacks*.

Act II, however, is a problem, primarily because here the playwright turns ambivalent toward her subject. Experimentation in bisexuality, formerly a metaphor for the decline of empire, has now become a symbol of liberation, even though none of the sexual relationships is making anyone happy. The play ends, peculiarly, with the starchy mother—a Margaret Thatcher lookalike—remembering with pleasure her first attempt at masturbation, then proceeding to embrace her younger self, which leaves us to conclude that the most complete form of sexual fulfillment is that species of self-love known as auto-eroticism. Still, if the playwright has provided more insights into the past than into the present, she has managed to forge an original, often ferocious satire, directed by Tommy Tune with force and precision and enacted by a talented cast with savage glee.

WILLIAM FINN'S *March of the Falsettos* has also been well staged (by James Lapine) and well acted (by an enthusiastic five-person company), but the first thing that strikes one about this ingratiating opera-musical is how isolated it is from anything more significant than personal relationships. From the very first number, an explosion of energy about "four Jews in a room bitching," we are conscious of real life on the stage; we are also conscious that the life being created is almost totally self-regarding, self-absorbed. The piece describes the odyssey of Marvin, who has left his wife to take up with a male lover, while Mendel, his psychiatrist, takes up with his wife; meanwhile, Marvin's son, Jason, mopes about, de-

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spondently musing over whether homosexuality is genetic. Offered through the medium of rather monotonous music and smart New York lyrics that owe much to the style of Stephen Sondheim, this psycho-opera concludes with an obligatory scene of reconciliation between the errant father and his abandoned son ("This here is love when we're talking face to face"), and Jason's happy discovery that he is starting to like girls. Mr. Finn knows how to please a West Side audience and doubtless has a happy career ahead of him in the Broadway musical theater, but I think his place will be more permanent once he acknowledges that even the most intense domestic crises are influenced by events outside the living room and psychiatrist's couch. What the piece lacks most is the very thing that makes it so easily ingested: a sense of context. Without this, *March of the Falsettos* is entertaining but claustral—charades performed in a living room with all the doors and windows shut.

Culture and Mobility

The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japanese American Community by Edna Bonacich and John Modell

(University of California Press; $18.95)

A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants Since 1960 by Stanley Lieberson

(University of California Press; $11.50)

The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America by Stephen Steinberg

(Atheneum; $14.95)

These three books deal with an issue that anyone in America can understand, and many are concerned with: why some groups have gotten ahead and others have not. This is the stuff of arguments in barrooms, dining rooms, city clubs, and maybe even cabinet rooms. The evidence is all around us, and daily to be found in the newspapers: the Koreans are opening fruit stands, the Indians are working as engineers and doctors, the Cubans have taken over in Miami, the Japanese and other Asian-Americans will soon be a majority in engineering and computer science programs at the University of California at Berkeley; meanwhile we wonder when and how the high welfare dependency rates among Puerto Ricans will come down, when the percentage of female-headed families among inner-city blacks will decline, and what the economic fate of legal and illegal immigrants from Mexico and Haiti will be. The explanations heard are not too esoteric: these work hard and those don't, these have stable families and those families break up, this group does better in school than that one.

It does not take an anthropologist or sociologist to see that there are differences between peoples. Indeed, in this country at least, sociologists have been expert at denying that the differences "really exist," although ordinary people, in their capacities as employers, workers, customers, storekeepers, homeowners, landlords, renters, can see that they do.

None of the authors of these books denies the differences exist. What will make the studies perhaps somewhat exotic to the average reader is that they are devoted to arguments about why the differences exist. Here we may distinguish three general possibilities. One, the simplest perhaps, is racism. Prejudice, discrimination, and law oppress some people, who are unable to get good schooling, good jobs, good housing. Different groups' situations vary according to the particular weight of the handicaps they bear. Thus, it should follow that white Anglo-Saxon Protestants do better, Catholics worse, Jews even worse, Orientals terribly, and that blacks are at the bottom of the heap. If this distribution, which was more or less true at different times in the past, still prevailed, we could easily match it up with various studies of white American preferences in peoples and races, and all would be well.

ALAS, the match doesn't work. In particular, certain groups that should not have gotten ahead have, and faster than others. The problem is the Japanese, the Jews, and a variety of other groups; and Japanese and Jews loom large in two of these books. Thus a second explanation immediately presents itself, since these two groups (and some of the others that have gotten ahead despite prejudice and discrimination) are noted for their distinctive cultures. Culture can be credited as the source of differences among groups. Admittedly culture is a vague term, encompassing customs, habits, attitudes, and more, but it can be summed up as denoting traits of behavior "inherited" through learning, in the family and the community. (Of course, there is another form of inheritance, genetic. Discussion of this possibility is strictly taboo among contemporary social scientists.)

There is a third possibility, however, one which can lead to some confusion among readers. This third possibility is neither racism nor culture, but class and social structure, equally obscure terms. They refer to a group's position in society, determined by its control, or lack of it, over economic, political, and other goods. It is a matter of great moment to some social scientists that culture should be shown to be unimportant or even mythical—this is the "myth" of Steinberg's *The Ethnic Myth*—and that class and social structure should be shown to be crucial.

I have, of course, oversimplified the debate greatly. No one (or hardly anyone) denies the significance of all three elements. The question is one of weight, significance, and explanatory power. And of course explanatory power potentially leads to policy—although none of these books is much concerned with policy, except, to a modest extent, Steinberg's.

But the passion with which the significance of culture is denied and the

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significance of racism and class is asserted in many quarters suggests an underlying conflict between the alternative analyses. Explanations based on racism and class seem to be allied against those that point to culture. If racism and class are the problem, it follows that we must do something for the groups that are behind: either fight racism more effectively, or overcome the advantages of upper classes and strengthen the resources of lower classes. If culture is the issue, one might infer that deprived groups must do something for themselves. The first two explanations lead to the demand that government do something for people, the second to the expectation that people do something for themselves. Once again the Japanese and the Jews are important examples. The government and the upper classes did little for them. Jews encountered discrimination and governmental indifference. The Japanese met with fiercer discrimination and the liquidation of their economic stake during the relocation of World War II.

EACH OF THESE BOOKS tells us something about how ethnic factors explain, or fail to explain, why some groups "fail" and why some groups "succeed" in the United States. (I use quotation marks only because many people, and in particular ethnic advocates, believe that economic success has meant failure in other terms, and economic backwardness has assured other kinds of success—commitment to ancestral values, for example.)

Edna Bonacich and John Modell have analyzed the excellent survey of Japanese Americans conducted by the Japanese American Research Project in 1964 and 1966. The Japanese Americans are a fascinating test case for theories of ethnicity. An economically successful group (though some studies show their economic success is not quite what should be expected, given their very high average educational achievement, which has been taken as evidence of discrimination), they were nevertheless subjected to severe discriminatory laws and actions, culminating in the mass removal from the Pacific Coast states in World II, incarceration in concentration camps, and the loss of most of their property. They are also a non-white group. Thus their success tests theories about the role of race and visibility in keeping down ethnic and racial groups, theories about the role of pre-existing prejudice and state discrimination, and theories about the significance of culture and values. If the descendants of white ethnic European groups can ask, If we make it, why can't the blacks? Japanese Americans are in a much better position to ask the same. Not that their scholars and writers do ask this question; they have on the whole accepted identification with the oppressed non-whites of the United States and the rest of the world, and argue away the significance or value of their educational and occupational success in the United States.

Bonacich and Modell explore the relationship between ethnic solidarity and economic success, although they don't address all aspects of the issue. Ivan Light argued a few years ago in an interesting book, *Ethnic Enterprise in America*, that trust among fellow ethnics explained Japanese and Chinese success in business and black failure. This trust enabled them to raise and borrow the small sums of capital needed to go into business. The Japanese Americans, whose immigration to this country was concentrated in the two decades before 1906, mostly became farmers and small-business men, or workers in family businesses and on farms run by Japanese. According to Bonacich and Modell, they became a "middleman minority"—such as the Jews are in so many countries, the Chinese in Southeast Asia, the Indians in Africa, and many others. But alas, in explaining the Japanese in these terms, Bonacich and Modell are pursuing their own theoretical hobbyhorse. Whatever "middleman minority" means, it seems hard to apply the term to Japanese American farmers. Middleman minorities are primarily in trade, and are generally attacked because the native population can see clearly that they buy at a low price and sell high, and because they consider them non-producers. The Japanese Americans were primarily producers of agricultural produce, and sold low. Their opponents were not their customers, except insofar as they were racially prejudiced, but other farmers whom they undersold by harder work and better methods. They also aroused fear because they were hardly assimilated, and Japan was then a potential enemy. I am sorry this study of Japanese Americans has been sandwiched between theoretical introductions and conclusions on middleman minorities.

Bonacich's and Modell's analysis of the contribution of the ethnic characteristics of Japanese to their success is more satisfactory. The authors tend—as do the other writers we will discuss—to downplay the significance of culture and values. They maintain that the Japanese simply seized the opportunities open to them in a situation in which they faced discrimination. These opportunities were in small business, agricultural and commercial. The ethnic solidarity that Ivan Light made

SMELL OF SURVIVAL, LONG RANGE

Blood and brain can do nothing with this primitive
scent skimmed off ground soggy with November rain
except to whiff you back to some child of yourself,
maybe to that first slap that tingled you into breathing.

Or farther back? Say, to baby fish, or bird, or reptile
jostled into the pungent savor of an old earth's morning?
Old men learn to forget so much, it may be
they can detect the odor of memory itself.

So wait. Under these dripping leaves of the oak
that grandfather planted, stand still and wait.
Over there from the brambles stirring
at the garden's edge may appear

some weasel-shape with enough cunning
of smell to stay visible among the living.
If nothing be seen, a squeal or squeak may open
your ear to what has long been in the air.

Ernest Sandeen

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much of did exist. However it was mostly a product of Japanese concentration in certain occupations, of their need to cooperate, and of their exclusion from the society around them. When prejudice rapidly declined after the war, the second generation—in particular the younger members—left the paternal occupations, went into the professions, and simultaneously ethnic solidarity declined, as measured, for example, by closeness to family and willingness to intermarry.

Bonacich and Modell are willing to credit many explanations of this economic success: discrimination by trade unions and employers forcing Japanese Americans into business of their own; the economic opportunities on the West Coast; ethnic solidarity which helped them get started; the use of unpaid family labor; the necessity, due to discrimination, to work harder for less return. But they are skeptical of any interpretation that emphasizes the distinctiveness of the values with which the Japanese came to the United States: "Cultural arguments of the Protestant-ethic type are, we feel, the most limited. . . ." Max Weber, as we shall see, is not doing well with contemporary sociologists. They are wary of attributing to anyone a distinctive commitment to a desirable value: differences are the result of circumstances. The Japanese did what they had to do, and presumably what non-Japanese coming from the same economic background, with the same experience, to the same place at the same time, and meeting the same discrimination, would have done. That's hard to believe, and I don't believe it.

WHY, FOR EXAMPLE, did Japanese American youths go on to higher education at a time when there were no jobs for them in the economy because of discrimination? Because, say Bonacich and Modell, their fathers thought it would nevertheless be useful to have sons trained in business management and scientific farming. A most "rational" explanation. But why then did the sons concentrate in engineering?

Stanley Lieberson concentrates directly on the European white immigrant/black comparison. The question is an old one. Beginning in the 1880s, the immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe came to the big cities of America poor, without skills or education. They suffered some discrimination but nevertheless by the 1960s were not behind other Americans in income and occupation. Blacks were always present in the north in small numbers, their numbers increased with the demand for labor in World War I, their migration northward was spurred by the cut-off of European immigration in 1924, and they continued northward in a huge flood in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Lieberson meticulously examines all the data from census and other sources on occupation, education, and residential segregation, in an attempt to answer the question why Eastern and Southern European immigrants and their children have done so much better than blacks. Like Bonacich's and Modell's, his is a complex explanation, though one based on a much larger range of data. He too sees the significance of a great range of factors—much more severe discrimination, the impact of visibility, the concentration of blacks in an economically backward region, economic opportunities in the places and at the time immigrants and migrants came. He also makes some ingenious points that have not been made before. Immigrants, he observes, can adapt their comings and goings closely to economic opportunity because their arrivals and departures are based on their own decisions. They came when there were jobs, didn't come—or left—when economic conditions were bad. Blacks, who were brought as slaves and then remained, had no such opportunity. More recently we have indeed seen an ebb and flow of black migration between north and south, determined by economic opportunity.

Lieberson, due to the nature of his data, cannot easily consider the influence of values and culture; he does not give them great weight, and instead attributes many of the differences to other factors. Thus, if blacks were poorly educated it was because of the very poor educational opportunities for blacks in the south. However, I doubt that opportunities in the north were also as poor as he suggests, and that they became worse as the number of blacks increased, as he believes.

But perhaps his most interesting finding is that the generation that came to adulthood in the years after World War I—those born between 1925 and 1935—fell most rapidly behind the European immigrants and their children. And further ". . . with respect to

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occupational trends for semiskilled and unskilled work and with respect to education, the biggest setback occurred to the cohort reaching adulthood shortly after World War II." I find this discovery mystifying, and wish Lieberson had plumbed it further. In view of the occupational opportunities that World War II provided, one would have expected this generation to have made the most rapid progress. There remains a further mystery in the decline of the situation of blacks: why, in particular, youth unemployment increased and family stability decreased during the 1960s and 1970s, decades when discrimination was falling rapidly and when blacks made rapid progress in education. One suspects government programs, such as expanded income maintenance for female-headed families, which also grew rapidly during that period, may have had something to do with this, but Lieberson ends his analysis in roughly 1960, and says little about government policies. There has been a moratorium on serious analysis of this issue because of its delicacy, but our understanding will be deficient until it is lifted.

Stephen Steinberg does not do anything to lift it. His "ethnic myth" refers to several myths. One is that the United States has welcomed immigrants. He has many quotations to show how many Americans, and distinguished ones, did not want immigrants and opposed the growing diversity of languages, religions, and cultures that free immigration brought. A second myth is that the characteristics ethnic groups brought to America persisted in either original or transmuted form, that ethnicity is still to some degree a reality for the descendants of immigrant groups. A third myth, and the one to which he devotes the most attention, is that distinctive culture and values played a role in determining the economic and occupational success of immigrants and their children.

One can always overstate a position in such a way that it can be attacked as a myth, and one can overstate the counter-position in such a way that that becomes a myth, too. Was the only reason that the United States became the greatest country of immigration in the world the fact that there was lots of hard and dirty work to be done in this new land and that settlers preferred to leave it to immigrants? Can it be argued that the major reason we admitted 1,500,000 immigrants in the last two years was that we needed their labor? Certainly we felt we owed something to Vietnamese boat people and Cambodian and Laotian refugees, certainly for political reasons we felt we had to admit the last Cuban wave, and for some of these immigrants (for example, the Cubans), fellow ethnics in the United States, now with some modest political weight, fought for their entry. There have always been mixed motives in immigration policies, except for the period between 1924 and the late 1940s, when the dominant aim was to accept no more immigrants. But also among these motives certainly has been an image of the United States as a haven for political and religious refugees, and for those escaping from societies without opportunities for economic mobility. A Pollyannaish version of our past history should of course be corrected (though not much in Steinberg's account will be new to those who know something about America's ethnic history), but one wonders why so much energy should be devoted to demonstrating the meanness of some of the motives that created our diverse and multi-ethnic society.

THERE IS a good deal of overkill, too, in Steinberg's treatment of the second myth, that of ethnic identity. Twenty years ago I pointed out that politicians did not make the same mistakes that sociologists did in extrapolating trends; they did not conclude that if ethnic identities were weaker than they had been a generation before, and weaker than they would be a generation hence (both certainly true), they could be ignored. Social identities are not so easily erased. Ethnic identities were never so sharply and openly discussed and analyzed as possible motives of behavior as in the late 1960s and early 1970s, some 50 years after the end of mass European immigration. Can we be so sure that the persistence of the importance of ethnic identities over such a long stretch of time portends their early demise? There is a tendency among social scientists, which Steinberg shares, to hasten the end. Robert E. Park predicts assimilation as the final point of equilibrium in an ethnically diverse society, and I am sure he is, in the end, right. The end, however, will be a long time coming, with many twists and turns on the way. Some overly enthusiastic advocates of the significance of ethnicity indeed must be corrected. But even our reduced flow of immigration continues to create new ethnic neighborhoods, to prop up old ones, to arrest in one degree or

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experts...charlatans...artists...lovers
scholars...cosmologists...scoundrels

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another assimilating trends in older communities. Of course, "the loss of the mother tongue, . . . economic and occupational mobility, . . . the decline of religion, . . . accelerating rates of ethnic and religious intermarriage," all mean that ethnicity in the future will have less significance than in the past. But I quote that passage, which trips off the typewriter so easily, to demonstrate the ironies of these extrapolations. For the year 1981, at least, religion does not seem to be in decline. In the long run, we will all be dead, but in the short run we will have to take account of ethnicity.

THE FINAL myth, to which Steinberg devotes his heaviest artillery, is that culture and values played some substantial role in the subsequent fate of immigrant groups. To his credit, he takes on one of the most difficult challenges to the notion that ethnic culture and values explain nothing important: the Jews (except for passing references, he does not deal with the other test case, the Japanese Americans). "The myth of Jewish Intellectualism," reads (in part) one chapter title. Steinberg explains that he has no argument with the fact that ethnic groups vary in educational achievement, "but with the assumption that this reflects the operation of cultural factors, such as the degree to which education is valued." He points out, for example—something that anyone from an orthodox family will know—that secular education and culture were not valued. Instead he argues that what was valued was often rote learning and "Talmudicism," that Jews came with somewhat more literacy than other Eastern European and Southern European groups, that they were not peasants but artisans and semiskilled workers, and that all this explains their more rapid economic progress, which underlay their educational achievements. This is not the place for a detailed examination of Steinberg's argument. There is a much more interesting question. Why is it so important to him that "Jewish intellectualism," and one can add to that all the other features that in some way or another distinctively characterize different immigrant groups (Irish political acumen, Chinese skill at engineering and architecture, etc.), be explained away as simply the product of what groups were before, and the niches that prejudice, region, and economic development made available at their first coming? Certainly a great deal can be explained that way. But in the end, after the explanation, the facts remain: Jewish dominance in the academy, and other facts that offer no pride to the groups involved, and that have consequences regardless of cause. One reason Steinberg insistently avoids cultural explanations is because of an academic argument that will not be of great interest to non-academic readers: with the revival of interest in Marx and the variants of neo-Marxism, it is important to many sociologists to oppose those who take Weberian approaches seriously. And yet, one wonders, where is the real conflict? No one pretends that culture and values come out of the void, are not themselves the product of history and experience. The argument very often seems to amount to one between the influence of an immediate and current history (for example, discrimination explains the black occupational distribution), or an older history (for example, past discrimination kept blacks out of skilled and white-collar occupations and business, created certain attitudes, and left a heritage of inexperience which now hurts them in entering these occupations). Those who argue for the significance of culture and values, and thus, to some extent, for the significance of an older history shaping current realities, are attacked as scientifically deficient. But in exposing their inadequacies, their critics very often end up talking about the same history, the same influences, as do those who emphasize culture and values.

Is the argument then simply an academic one, and of no consequence to non-academicians? Not at all. The debate also has other significant implications. Those who emphasize current or nearly current circumstances also insist on the malleability of individuals and groups. It is true, they agree, that Jews flooded the colleges and universities that were open to them 60 years ago (when, I would argue against Steinberg, they were still poor); but if circumstance a, b, or c were different for other groups—circumstances we can arrange through current public policies—why, then, everyone would be in the same situation. The argument is similar to that between those who once explained different ethnic outcomes as the result of the germ plasm, racial inheritance, and those, such as Ruth Benedict and Franz Boas, who attacked the racists and argued that the differences are explained by culture. Culture then seemed more malleable than racial inheritance (which was itself also

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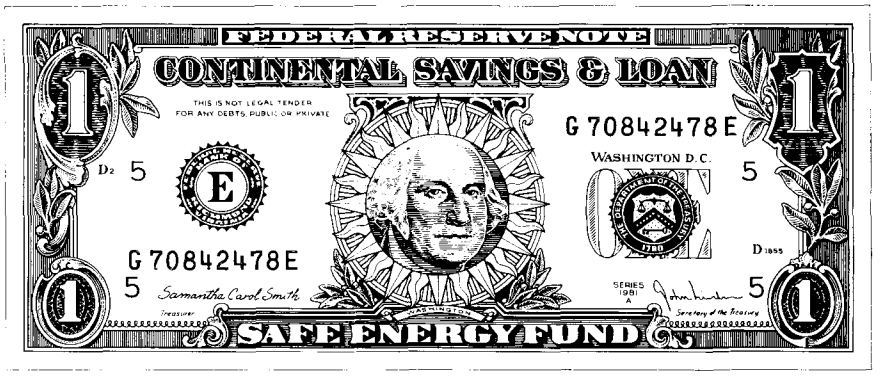

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the product of history, but of a much longer history), and thus a liberal and progressive political outlook found it congenial. People could change, would change, could be changed. Now culture seems hard to change—in part because of our sense of the persistence of ethnicity—but immediate conditions seem easier to influence. Discrimination can be reduced, opportunity expanded by law, and such efforts will take care of the backwardness of some ethnic and racial groups.

It will, undoubtedly—in time. But it is just this time that the progressive social scientist does not want to grant. It is not only the forthcoming end of ethnic differences that he telescopes, moving it closer to the present; he also brings closer the factors that created these differences, so that the end of inequality may be hastened. If the causes are so apparent, and lie not so far back in time, why then the solutions must be at hand. What a threat to such a conception must be the long history of the Jews, or of the Japanese, or indeed of any group, and the notion that residues have been left that shape the current carriers of that history, conceivably subtle residues with substantial consequences. And how threatening then must be an explanation of economic development, such as Weber's, which reaches back to religious foundations that may be hundreds and thousands of years in the making.

All this, of course, speaks to the consequences of ideas, not to their truth. Our sense of the consequences shapes us all in the search for the truth. But I believe social scientists must free themselves from the fear of the consequences if they are to explore more truthfully and effectively the causes and meaning of ethnic and racial differences.

Nathan Glazer

Nathan Glazer is professor of education and sociology at Harvard University and author of *Affirmative Discrimination* (Basic Books) and, with Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (MIT Press).

Young TR

Mornings on Horseback by David McCullough

(Simon & Schuster; $14.95)

Theodore Roosevelt is not an easy man for a late-20th-century American to fathom. He reveled in the hard life, but brought unprecedented formality and extravagance to Washington. His speeches and writings could live up to the worst Old World stereotypes of Americans as arrogant and simple-minded, but he may have been the best-read world leader of his time (and it is not clear that any president has surpassed him since in that department). He cultivated serious, cerebral friendships with women, campaigned for the rights of Russian Jews, and extolled the spunk and enterprise of low-born frontiersmen. But from his pulpit in the White House he dismissed a moderate, constitutional government of Latin Americans as "those contemptible little creatures in Bogota," and by treating them accordingly, did as much as anyone to launch a century of bad feeling between North and South America.

Three episodes from Roosevelt's young life begin to suggest the dimensions of the man.

Here is 11-year-old Teddy's happy account of a family encounter with a group of Italian beggars at the end of 1869, during one of those grand tours of Europe that wealthy Americans undertook after the Civil War:

> We tossed the cakes to them and fed them like chickens with small pieces of cake and like chickens they ate it. Mr. Stevens [a traveling companion] kept guard with a whip with which he pretended to whip a small boy. We made them open their mouths and tossed cake into it. . . . We made the crowds . . . give us three cheers for U.S.A. before we gave them cakes.

Here, from his Dakota chic period as a part-time rancher, is the legendary (but true) tale of his chase after three thieves who had absconded down river with a flat-bottomed scow. "To submit tamely and meekly to theft or to any other injury is to invite almost certain repetition of the offense," he said later, explaining why he had gone to such lengths—building a pursuit boat; traveling hundreds of miles over a period of 11 days; enduring a blizzard, ice floes, and below-zero weather—to bring the offenders to justice. The story was often told as an illustration of Roosevelt's persistence, but a century later its most wonderful feature is a sidelight—the fact that in spare moments during this wintry escapade on the Little Missouri, he managed to read all of *Anna Karenina*.

Then there is the key move of his early political career—his courageous, untempered assault on Jay Gould and his seizure of the Manhattan Elevated Railway Company in 1886. The quality of political rhetoric has taken a dive since Roosevelt described Gould and his associates as "sharks," "swindlers," "common thieves," and members of "that most dangerous of all classes, the wealthy criminal class." In the end, Gould kept his railway company and T. R. Westbrook, who had declared the company bankrupt and appointed Gould men to run it, kept his judgeship. But Roosevelt, going against his party leadership, mobilized the press and public opinion, forced an official investigation, and stuck in voters' memories as a bold, honest man who could shift the political odds with his energy and oratory.

TODAY, most Americans can say more about Teddy Roosevelt than about his predecessor, William McKinley, or his successor, William Howard Taft. But we have an image of Roosevelt—bellicose, childlike, over-energetic—that is less complete than our images of contemporary figures about whom we know less. This is partly because Vietnam and kindred experiences have made us remember his gleeful view of war and international adventure more than anything else about his public policies, and partly because, with a public-relations consciousness decades ahead of its time, he flaunted personal eccentricities that don't square with the current, post-Freudian, electronic-age notions of stability and sanity. Ever since *Arsenic and Old Lace*, in fact, Roosevelt and lunacy have been closely associated.

Two years ago, Edmund Morris published the first volume of a two-volume biography of Roosevelt. For a British journalist, Morris showed a startling

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Theodore Roosevelt as a young man by Jack Coughlin for *The New Republic*

understanding of Americans and their politics, and he made an impressive synthesis of the sprawl of Roosevelt's career and personality. Colorfully written and imposingly long, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* became a Book-of-the-Month Club selection and won a Pulitzer Prize.

All this happened when David McCullough, author of *The Path Between the Seas* and two other widely admired books on American history, was hard at work on his own treatment of Roosevelt's early life. Now the finished product has emerged, and however much or little it may have been colored by Morris's book, it is tempting to compare them as a study in the jerky march of scholarship and the cruel vagaries of the book business.

The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt and *Mornings on Horseback* are not strictly parallel works. One is half of a biography, taking its subject to the age of 42, when he became the youngest president in American history. The other breaks off 15 years earlier, and is billed as "the story of an extraordinary family, a vanished way of life, and the unique child who became Theodore Roosevelt." McCullough, author of marvelous books about a canal and a bridge, has approached Roosevelt as another monumental American enterprise, and his interest is in the people and forces that produced him as much as in the man himself.

Nevertheless, there are long overlaps and telling discrepancies between these books. And after *Mornings on Horseback*, some of Morris's judgments, reflecting conventional wisdoms about Roosevelt and his background, look questionable.

Morris, for example, portrays Roosevelt's plunge into politics as a complete break from family tradition—a vulgar step that alarmed most of his relatives. True, his father had been nominated to serve as collector of customs of the port of New York, but he had been picked for his reputation as an upright, apolitical man. He was, according to Morris, "as politically naive as his son," then 19 and a sophomore at Harvard. In McCullough's book, we learn that the elder Theodore Roosevelt had been one of the leaders of a reform faction at the 1876 Republican national convention in Cincinnati, where he had delivered a feisty speech attacking Senator Roscoe Conkling and the New York Republican machine. None of the Roosevelt biographers has mentioned this; McCullough comments in a footnote: "It has been primarily from contemporary newspapers and TR Sr.'s own correspondence that this account has been drawn." Could it be that Morris failed to read that correspondence and those newspaper accounts? Considering the huge scope of his half-finished enterprise, that would be understandable. Morris describes Roosevelt as a reckless investor, a spendthrift, and "no businessman." But he seems to accept Roosevelt's own judgment of the scale of his wealth. "I am left about $8,000 a year—comfortable though not rich," Roosevelt said after his father's death. McCullough, more alert to American inflation, points out just what a $125,000 inheritance meant in Roosevelt's youth. In his junior year at Harvard, he spent $685.80 on clothes, when the best suit cost $35. His $8,000 student's income, all successfully disposed of, was $3,000 more than the salary of Charles W. Eliot, Harvard's president.

ABOVE ALL, Morris seems to accept the notion of Roosevelt's childhood asthma as a "congenital ailment" conquered through a program of exercise and outdoor activity. The subject receives an appropriately brief, bland treatment in *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*. But McCullough, whose last two books were preoccupied with medical matters (*The Great Bridge* with the bends, and *The Path Between the Seas* with malaria and yellow fever), is more suspicious and more inquisitive. Using Roosevelt's diary as a medical log, he finds a pattern which is "too pronounced to be coincidental." The asthma attacks happen on weekends, and particularly on Sundays. Sunday is the day the family goes to church, but, just as significantly, the day their father is guaranteed to be at home.

Morris leaves an impression of the Roosevelt family as lively and affectionate New York burghers. McCullough suggests that they were more than that. He portrays Theodore Roosevelt Sr. as a tireless practitioner of

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noblesse oblige, who set a mood of high-minded, furious intensity in his family. Every hour should be filled with useful activity, he preached. Small talk was discouraged. Theodore Sr. would call on his children to give speeches at the dinner table, and in the summer they would act Shakespeare under the trees. They were educated by private tutors, but their father turned their whole lives into a kind of school. He divided his own time among a host of philanthropies, including his cherished Newsboys' Lodging House (in an era when, evidently, children would run away from home to become newsboys), and his children—certainly his sons—were expected to follow his example.

The summons to duty, inevitably, rang loudest in the ear of Theodore Roosevelt Jr. as the eldest son. He was driven to adopt the same whirling-vortex style of life, and forbidden, by implication, to register any doubts. His terrible fits of asthma were a form of resistance he could get away with only because they were presumed to be involuntary. They were his plea for a gentler existence and a less demanding brand of paternal attention—and in that, they were successful. After an attack of asthma, Teddy usually would skip church (a family activity) and get, instead, a trip to the country with his father—just the two of them. As his mother wrote in August 1870, "Teedie [his general childhood nickname] had an attack of asthma on last Sunday night, and Papa took him to Oyster Bay where he passed Monday night and Tuesday night. Of course, Teedie was in ecstasies of delight."

AS A WAY of life, the commanding, nonstop activism of the Roosevelts, father and son, has a practical liability—the activist must always have people to act on. A family has room for only one such person at a time. That, possibly, is why Teddy Roosevelt's asthma faded after he went away to Harvard, around the time of his father's final illness and death. That is also, possibly, why Teddy's sisters felt more strongly about him than about their husbands, according to McCullough, and why his younger brother Elliott, father of Eleanor, was alcoholic and unstable. ("He can't be helped," Theodore concluded when Elliott began living under an assumed name with a mistress, shortly before his death at 33.)

Both McCullough's and Morris's accounts resist the notion of an unpleasant, smothering side to the Roosevelt personality, although they offer countless clues that Teddy had such a side. He certainly had an amazing talent for seizing the moment and spotlight, often at the expense of milder types who played by the rules. While Secretary of the Navy John D. Long was on vacation or consulting his doctor about a case of corns, Assistant Secretary Roosevelt was issuing quite unauthorized orders that would speed the movement of American ships to the Philippines in case of a Spanish-American war. Later, after Roosevelt had dumbfounded Washington by turning soldier, he and General Leonard Wood took premature possession of a transport ship to get their Rough Riders from Florida to Cuba, and then fended off the two other regiments that had been assigned to the same vessel. Whenever he could, Roosevelt would adopt the approach to life summed up by one of his favorite games—the "obstacle walk," in which he would proceed directly through any obstruction in his straight-line path.

As in his other books, McCullough tries to let the material in *Mornings on Horseback* speak for itself. Alert to the hazards of psychobiography, he never states a neat explanation of Roosevelt's asthma and its cure. Just the same, a Roosevelt biographer would want to capitalize on McCullough's work, and he might not want to have published shortly before its appearance. It is hard to resist the evidence that Roosevelt's asthma had a large psychosomatic component, and it is hard not to reinterpret his whole career with that in mind. But timing considerations cut both ways, of course. The market may have trouble dealing with two books about Theodore Roosevelt in such swift succession. The fear of that may have something to do with McCullough's focus on the family, and with his decision to end the story where he does.

McCullough's goal—bringing a 20th-century reader into the world of a 19th-century aristocratic family—isn't fully realized. Several of the Roosevelts and their intimates come across as little more than lively correspondents, perhaps because their correspondence is most of what we have to judge them by. But like McCullough's earlier books, *Mornings on Horseback* opens a window onto a period that has always seemed remote and cartoonlike. It introduces us to a collection of fascinating people and makes their society vivid, plausible, and even a tempting destination for anyone planning a trip back in time.

James Lardner

James Lardner is theater critic for the *Washington Post*.

Literary, Not Literal

The Art of Biblical Narrative
by Robert Alter

(Basic Books; $13.95)

Robert Alter's book may open up the Bible to those who usually avoid it, and offer new insights to readers who know it well. Approaching his task as a literary critic, Alter demonstrates that the Bible owes its enduring appeal not simply to its status as a sacred relic, but to the extraordinary quality of its characterizations, its dramatic means of storytelling, and its powerful—often mysterious—communication of the complexities of meaning in human interaction.

Traditionally, of course, devout Jews and Christians considered the Bible as "the primary and unitary source of divinely revealed truth." Fundamentalists in both camps often have regarded it as a seamless whole, as if dictated directly by God himself. Moreover, they claim that the Bible relates historical fact—even Adam's and Eve's encounter with a talking snake, an event which, some insist, occurred 6,000 years ago.

Since the 19th century, however, historical critics have challenged both views, and, for those who accept the results of their research, effectively demolished them. Noting breaks, repetitions, gaps, and contradictions in the texts, scholars suggested that the biblical writers composed their narratives from a wide range of sources. In Alter's words,

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> A century of analytic scholarship has made powerful arguments to the effect that where we might naively imagine that we are reading a text, what we actually have is a constant stitching together of earlier texts drawn from divergent literary and sometimes oral traditions.

But what becomes of the continuity of a text after scholars have cut it into the pieces from which it was woven, leaving us with a patchwork pile of sagas, legends, and court histories? And what becomes of claims to religious and historical truth, if we agree that the creation account of Genesis 1, for example, received its present form around 600 BCE, from someone not present at the event, nor even (as pious tradition claimed) from Moses himself?

While accepting the methods (and many of the conclusions) of such analyses, Alter chooses to look at the finished narratives, suggesting that art, not accident, guided their authors. The story of Jacob's sons, for example, reveals how violence and betrayal within a family plays out its consequences over several generations. Alter proposes considering biblical narrative, despite its historical form, as a kind of prose fiction, arguing that "history is far more intimately related to fiction than we have been accustomed to assume." To appreciate its subtleties and resonances, he says, the reader must recognize the conventions on which biblical narrative builds: thematic conventions connect, for example, the betrothal stories of Isaac and Rebekah, Rachel and Jacob, Ruth and Boaz. Alter points out how biblical authors use dialogue to create powerful and complex characterizations. His own translations may jolt readers sentimentally attached to the King James Version, but will delight those who appreciate the direct and expressive quality of the original Hebrew.

MOST INTRIGUING is Alter's demonstration that when biblical writers incorporate various materials—and different versions of a story—into a single narrative, they are not (as scholars too often assume) slavishly following their sources. Instead, they use repetition and variation on themes as do writers of musical composition, to articulate the continuities, the relationships, and the dissonances of the stories they tell. Alter compares such artistry with the technique of film montage, and even with that of post-cubist painting. The book of Genesis, for example, includes not one creation story but two—accounts that not only diverge in tone, style, and scope, but also contradict each other. The opening chapter of Genesis unfolds the story of creation as a vast, orderly procession: God first divides light from dark, heaven from earth, separates the waters from dry land, and brings into being plants, birds, sea creatures, land animals; and finally He creates man and woman, giving them dominion over all the rest. Abruptly, as this account ends, the scene changes: at Genesis 2:4, the folkloric story of Adam and Eve begins. Here the Lord first makes a man out of earth, and places him into a garden oasis he plants. By contrast with the first account, the second relates how He calls into being plants, animals, and, last of all, woman ("as a kind of divine afterthought") only *after* Adam's creation, and to serve his needs. In Alter's words,

> It may make no logical sense to have Eve created after Adam and inferior to him when we have already been told that she was created at the same time and in the same manner as he, but it makes perfect sense as an account of the contradictory facts of a woman's role in the post-edenic scheme of things. . . . the Hebrew writer takes advantage of the composite nature of his art to give us a tension of views that will govern most of the biblical stories—first, woman as man's equal sharer in dominion, standing in exactly the same relation to God as he; then, woman as man's subservient helpmate, whose weakness and blandishments will bring such woe into the world.

On a larger scale, the juxtaposition of the two accounts allows for different perspectives on "the bewildering complex reality that involves the elusive interaction of God, man, and the natural world":

> The world is orderly, coherent, beautifully patterned, and at the same time it is a shifting tangle of resources and topography, both a mainstay and a baffling challenge to man. Humankind is the divinely appointed master of creation, and an internally divided rebel against the divine scheme, destined to scrabble a painful living from the soil that has been blighted because of man.

The technique of including such disparate visions within the same context affords an enormous range of interpretation, and accounts for much of the Bible's appeal to peoples of diverse cultural and historical experience.

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Yet the biblical accounts manifest some consistencies as well. The stories of Joseph and of David, for example, demonstrate how human choice, whether for violence or compassion, elicits specific consequences: in religious terms, what happens in history reveals divine justice.

Alter mars his own exposition by occasionally lapsing into disastrously chosen idioms: at one point, for example, he turns David into a cowboy, who "heads for the badlands, accompanied by a band of tough fighting men disaffected from Saul"; at another, he describes how David first glimpsed Bathsheba "while . . . at home enjoying his siesta, peeping at a bathing beauty on a neighboring roof." More critical is his rather muddled discussion of the distinction between fiction and history, which detracts from his exposition where one most wants to learn from it.

Yet the book is too good to waste space discussing its flaws. Readers of the New Testament, too, have much to learn from Alter's insights. Those who read the gospels not simply as collections of anecdotes drawn from tradition but as works of "composite artistry" will appreciate them anew: like the narratives of the Hebrew Bible, those of the gospels are far more than collections of assorted traditions. The gospel of Mark, for example, usually considered the most "primitive" of the gospels, uses repetition (note, for example, the recurrence of the miraculous feeding in Mark 6 and Mark 8) and interweaves its sources to construct spare and powerful narrative.

Despite his literary approach, Alter avoids falling into a facile view of the "Bible as literature." Instead, his exposition invites the reader to rediscover biblical narratives on several levels, whether one turns to them for dramatic, psychologically penetrating stories, for ethical instruction, for religious perspectives on the mysteries of human existence—or for all of these.

Elaine H. Pagels

Elaine H. Pagels is professor of religion at Barnard College, Columbia University. She is the author of *The Gnostic Gospels* (Random House) and *The Gnostic Paul* (Fortress).

Falling into the Quagmire

Why Vietnam? Prelude to America's Albatross by Archimedes L. Patti

(University of California Press; $19.50)

This extraordinary account of events in Vietnam and at the end of World War II, with an epilogue on the period 1945-55, is both an extremely detailed record of a critical and little-known stage in the history of America's involvement in Indochina and a commentary on American foreign policy toward the third world as a whole. Written by an ex-American intelligence officer, the book is a valuable firsthand record. Readers will welcome the portraits of Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap, with whom Patti had a number of long conversations in 1945. But several broader questions also hang over Patti's incredibly detailed account of the late summer and early fall of 1945. How was it that the United States, committed in principle to oppose colonialism ever since Roosevelt and Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter in 1941, eventually acquiesced in the reassertion of French control over Indochina? Why, either in 1945, 1950, 1954, or subsequently, was Washington unable to recognize the fundamentally nationalist character of Ho Chi Minh's movement? Why, in short, did the United States abandon its tradition of anti-colonialism in favor of clumsy and frequently disastrous attempts to replace colonial regimes with client states of its own, in Indochina and elsewhere? Patti's answers to these questions are not fully satisfactory, but his work is of great value in dealing with them.

An OSS officer who previously had organized clandestine operations in Italy, Patti was sent to southern China to organize similar operations in Indochina in 1945. Although Patti believed that the United States would favor self-government or independence for Indochina after the war, his mission was not political; he was primarily concerned with securing intelligence on enemy activities in Indochina, which the Japanese had occupied since 1940. In April 1945, he discovered the existence of the Viet Minh, a coalition of nationalist groups including the Indochinese Communist party, and soon met its leader, Ho Chi Minh. Patti was immediately impressed by Ho, who expressed the hope that Washington would support his drive for Vietnamese independence after the war. His esteem for Ho increased when the Vietnamese leader began providing useful intelligence, confirming that his organization did indeed spread over most of the country.

ALTHOUGH the political future of Vietnam still was undetermined when the atomic bomb brought a sudden halt to the war in August, the Allied leaders already had divided the responsibility for accepting the surrender of Japanese forces in Vietnam between the nationalist Chinese, who would perform the task north of the 16th parallel, and the British, who would administer the surrender in the south. Before these plans could be executed, Patti was authorized to proceed to Hanoi to check on the condition of Allied POWs. Fully half of the book—225 out of 450 pages of text—describes what Patti saw, heard, and did in Hanoi during the five weeks in late August and September 1945, when Ho Chi Minh made his first bid for power.

The Japanese had driven out the French civil authorities in March 1945, and during the last two weeks of August Ho Chi Minh organized a provisional government, proclaimed independence, and established a good measure of authority throughout Vietnam. Much of Patti's account foreshadows Vietnam's subsequent history; Ho's control already was much stronger in Hanoi and the north than in Saigon and the south, where he had to contend with numerous other nationalist and religious factions. During these weeks Patti passed several of Ho's appeals for American recognition on to China for transmission to the United States, but without result.

The situation was transformed when the occupying powers arrived in September. In the south the British general Gracey, who sympathized entirely with French attempts to re-impose colonialism, immediately helped them regain their authority in a bloody coup. In the north the Chinese set about plundering

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the country and establishing a lasting economic presence; Patti provocatively argues that the Chinese who settled in the north to establish an economic empire migrated south in 1955, and that their expulsion from the south in 1978 was the Vietnamese response to three decades of exploitation. The Chinese government used its presence in Vietnam to extort concessions from the French on other issues, and turned its authority over to the French in early 1946. By this time Patti had left Hanoi.

One year later, in 1947, war broke out between the French and the Viet Minh; three years later, in 1950, the United States decided to support the French military effort. This decision generally has been viewed as an outgrowth of the Korean War, but Patti has discovered documentation showing that the president and secretary of state had decided to resist communist expansion in Indochina months earlier, in March 1950. Four years later, when the French gave up on the war as hopeless, the United States picked up the impossible burden of trying to create a viable, non-communist alternative to the Viet Minh.

WHY DID all this happen, and what could and should have been different? Patti does not pretend to be impartial; he regards Ho as the legitimate representative of the nationalist aspirations of his people. Despite Ho's Comintern training, Patti presents persuasive evidence that Ho was in no way Moscow's tool in 1945, and probably never would have been. He does not directly address the issue of the morality of support for a highly repressive regime, but one could infer from his account that while the Viet Minh might have taken some brutal measures against the dissident groups in the south, suffering on the scale endured during the subsequent wars with the French and Americans never would have occurred. Certainly, as Patti points out, neither Paris nor Washington ever successfully created an effective Vietnamese counterweight to the Viet Minh; their attempts only created large classes of Vietnamese dependent on a Western presence, who inevitably suffered heavily when Ho and his successors finally triumphed. To Patti the question to be answered is how the United States wound up on the wrong side. He ascribes principal responsibility to the death of President Roosevelt, the influence of economic interests on American foreign policy, and the emergence of undiscriminating anti-communism as the basic American response to change abroad. Undoubtedly there is some truth to all these explanations, but Patti does not explore any of them thoroughly. His account of Vietnamese conditions in 1945 is almost surely definitive. But he has not dealt sufficiently with broader aspects of American policy that have influenced American moves in Indochina and elsewhere in the third world since World War II.

TO BEGIN WITH, American opposition to colonialism was by no means as definite a position as both Patti and Ho seemed to believe. Roosevelt, it is true, had argued that the principles of the Atlantic Charter should apply to colonized peoples—much to the anger of Churchill, who insisted that they applied only to victims of Nazi aggression, and by implication, only to people with white skin—and FDR had also stated that France should not rule Indochina after the war. His pronouncements on Indochina, however, were among his many sweeping statements that were never backed up in detail, and Walter LaFeber has argued persuasively that things probably would not have been different even if he had lived. His alternative plans for an "international trusteeship" were rather vague; more significantly, by the spring of 1945 concern for the future of France had apparently caused Roosevelt to abandon his stand, and to allow the French to resume governing the colony subject to meeting certain standards of colonial rule. Undoubtedly Roosevelt's anticolonialism represented a traditionally powerful strain in American opinion, but one must not ignore the existence of an opposite view, visible at least since 1898, which sympathized with European colonialism and was not even averse to having the United States play a similar role. A similar split lies behind debates over American intervention in much of the world today. The American failure to insist upon Vietnamese independence also becomes more understandable in terms of broader priorities. Most American policy-makers were justifiably more concerned with strengthening France and the rest of Western Europe in 1945 than they were with the future of Southeast Asia.

The half-hearted nature of American anti-colonialism, however, does not explain everything. To endorse the resumption of French rule in principle was one thing; to ignore the emerging Viet Minh, support the French in a hopeless war, and eventually undertake the same war after France had abandoned it, was quite another. Here Patti's story underlines another chronic failure of American policy in the third world—inability of top-level policy-makers to secure and make use of accurate information. Ignorance of Indochina was as broad as it was deep, and shifts in policy seemed to reflect everything *except* changes in conditions there.

Thus FDR talked in 1942 and 1943 of not letting the French "back into" Indochina, seemingly unaware that they had never left. In fact the Japanese had allowed the French administration to function ever since 1940; only in March 1945 did they expel the French, coincidentally at the very moment FDR was beginning to suggest that the French might regain their authority after all. What made Vietnam a particularly suitable candidate for independence in the summer of 1945 was the existence of the Viet Minh, a widespread nationalist organization with the capacity to take control of the country. Patti, whose OSS background disposed him to be more impressed by the effectiveness of an organization than by its precise ideological coloration, reported this phenomenon, but his reports had to pass through many unsympathetic hands and almost certainly never reached the levels where decisions were made. Similarly, as Patti notes, Dean Acheson in 1949 was already referring to Ho as a Communist agent of Moscow rather than a nationalist, despite the lack of any evidence for this contention.

AN INABILITY or unwillingness to make use of accurate information has continued to characterize American policy toward Indochina and other areas of the third world. Thus the Foreign Service officers who correctly evaluated the strengths of the Chinese Communists and the Chinese Nationalists in 1945 were purged; William Shawcross has described how Foreign Service officers who attempted to reveal the truth about the Lon Nol regime in

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Cambodia had their careers ruined; and William Sullivan has recently described the frustration of trying to get the truth about the situation in Iran across to Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Thus, while it is not possible for such a detailed narrative to deal adequately with the sources of American intervention in Indochina, Patti's story of how the United States missed its first chance to avoid this catastrophe certainly illustrates the problems of confusion and misinformation that have plagued American policy toward the third world ever since. It is in many ways a discouraging book. The pronouncements of the new administration suggest that many of the mistakes Patti describes are likely to be repeated; even before Reagan had taken office, his transition team, his UN ambassador-designate, and other officials were busily denouncing the on-the-scene reports of the American ambassador to El Salvador, and generally giving the impression that the new administration would put a high priority on asserting American will regardless of the local situation or the consequences. What is even more depressing is to come face to face with the changes that have occurred in the United States's view of itself and the rest of the world's view of the United States since 1945. Now that the United States has become the symbol of imperialism within the third world, it is difficult and painful to recall a time when, rightly or wrongly, the third world viewed us in a completely different light. Even those Americans who will not be persuaded by Patti's argument will have great difficulty reading his account of his last conversation with Ho Chi Minh in September of 1945 without feeling a mixture of regret, bewilderment, and shame:

> Ho asked me to carry back to the United States a message of warm friendship and admiration for the American people. He wanted Americans to know that the people of Viet Nam would long remember the United States as a friend and an ally. They would always be grateful for the material help received but most of all for the example the history of the United States had set for Viet Nam in its struggle for independence.

David E. Kaiser

David E. Kaiser, who teaches history and social science at Carnegie-Mellon University, is the author of *Economic Diplomacy and the Origins of the Second World War* (Princeton University Press).

Brief Review

Noble House
by James Clavell

(Delacorte; $19.95)

A wise man once said that a cliché is simply the right idea applied to the wrong subject. The phrase "they all look alike," for example, is incorrect when applied to Orientals, but it becomes a telling statement when directed to its true subject—Western novels about Hong Kong. As an avid reader of John le Carré, John Gordon Davis, Robert Elegant, James Clavell, and too many others, I can report that the cliché is indeed true, that somewhere around the 30th account of intrigue and dissolution east of Suez, they all do begin to look alike. From the opening typhoon to the closing mudslide, James Clavell's 1,200-page *Noble House* is the Hong Kong novel to end all Hong Kong novels. What follows, then, can be read as an obituary for the genre:

Another bloody great sunrise. The empire was dying—I could hear it moaning in the next room. I poured a tall frozen beer down my throat and fell in love with Sum Poon Tang. Her long golden body lay across the bed like a beached whale. "Ai-yah!" she purred. "Come here and love me you great red hairy barbarian." A typhoon came roaring out of the South China Sea. Refugees huddled, sampans scurried, mountains collapsed. I strapped on my Webley-Vickers .98 and bounded down the stairs, my forehead beaded with the first rivulets of a long day of sweat. On the street the Orient hit me. I picked myself up and looked around at the sights and smells, but I couldn't see anything except a rickshaw man with pipestem legs buying pipecleaners and hawkers hawking their inscrutable Chinese vegetables while Hakkas hacked at the pavements, and Shanghai fell. I knocked back another beer.

The opium expanded in my lungs as I saw Tin Rin Rin in the street with tears rolling up her cheeks. To survive in the Confucian world one must abandon those assumptions that seemed so ironclad as one sat before a cheery fire in the Dorchester. Or wind up like the bloody Yanks with their *nouveau riche* dollars waltzing into Asia with ideas that didn't work in Trachoma, Washington, and bollixing up the whole show. Not like us, of course.

I drained the bottle in one swig and said, "Fu Ling, when does a man truly know China?" His eyes narrowed to a slit—she was standing across the room, I'd had her once after a booze-up in the officer's mess—and said, "Ah, there is a certain saying which in the Ming dynasty achieved some currency amongst the peasants of Wanking province, 'He who attempts to ride the tiger will very possibly encounter great difficulty in getting off.'" Outside, through the sweating haze, I saw a bank collapse, and then another, and then another. Rebounding down the stairs I saw a teeming mass, a river of human angst, thrusting their Little Red Books in the air as they marched on Government House chanting "We don't care what the people may say/ Rock and roll is here to stay."

I fell into a rattan chair, pulled off my shoes, and turned them over a bucket to drain off the sweat. In front of me was Ho Ho Ho, her long breasts swinging gracefully against her small, pert, firm legs. She said, "O-ho you great blue-eyed devil." I staggered out to a girlie bar to try to forget this whole stinking city, the corruption, the smells, the bodies lying in the street that make your car go bump-bump-bump, the shouts and gurgles and burps of people eating too much bean curd, the human debris being used for landfill, the cynical glassy stares of men in the wrong culture and too shy to ask for directions.

After that my whole life was a blank, I was in a vacuum, staring without seeing. Jade Lotus snapped me out of it, she knew kung fu. I picked myself up off the floor and gazed at her almond breasts. "What matter you, hah," she spit, "for two minutes you sit there in blank vacuum, no buy me girlie drink." I bought her a White Russian but it failed the sex test and was disqualified. In a sweaty cave somewhere in Yenan a young peasant named Mao was formulating theories he hoped would change the world.

Tom Ricks

Tom Ricks taught at Lingnan College in Hong Kong from 1977 to 1979.

Coming:

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on the Chicago Cubs.

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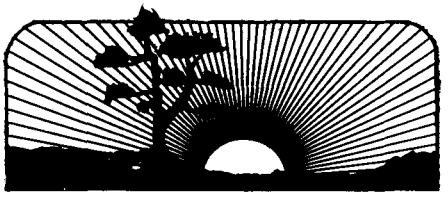

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Washington Diarist

Puzzles

Edward Bennett Williams was our guest the other day at one of *TNR*'s periodic editorial luncheons. He reflected on some of the woes of our litigious society. The courts are being choked, he said, by procedural anachronisms, lazy judges, and the art of tactical delay. Williams did not touch on another reason that the courts are so busy and overcrowded. In the last 25 years the courts have arrogated for themselves a central role in allocating social goods and setting social norms—a role reserved in most democracies for the legislature. Faced with the timidity or hostility of elected officials, American liberals had to ask the courts to decide the admissibility of segregation, abortion, and busing. Most parliamentary democracies don't grant the courts such sweeping powers for social change. In Italy, for example, abortion was legalized by the legislature and the decision upheld by referendum. But the government of the United States was designed by a group of men deeply distrustful of government and determined to limit its ability to commit mischief. They succeeded. Two parliamentary houses and a president, each elected independently, and each with a veto power over the other, is a brilliant formula for inaction. For a small agrarian society of yeoman Lockeans it is an inspired idea. But for an industrial giant of two hundred million ruling a continent and running an empire it is a cumbersome arrangement. Today Congress's standing army of 18,000 staffers and the president's legions are locked in battle over such issues as a three-year versus a two-year tax cut. It is left to the nine platonic guardians of the court to settle the big ones. And, after a generation of acting like a legislature, the court appears ready to take on the duties of the market. The Supreme Court recently ruled that jail matrons in Oregon may sue for sex discrimination on the grounds that they are paid less than male guards. The jail matrons contended that although they didn't do "equal work" (they supervise less than one-tenth as many prisoners as the males), they were entitled to comparable pay for work of comparable worth. Opponents of the decision contended that unless a comparable worth doctrine was denied, a Pandora's box of claims would be opened. A teacher could claim to be worth at least as much as a garbage collector. Is there anyone who cannot find another American who is paid more for less worthy work? Do we really want a national version of the federal government's nightmarish G-S system? In any case, the garbage collectors are safe. If they lose a round to the schoolteachers, they're sure to recoup their losses with a suit comparing the utility of their work to that of the comparable worth lawyers.

Liberals have long lamented the fact that conservatives have successfully wrapped themselves in the flag and other sacred symbols of America. Take baseball, for example. It is George Will who has crusaded against one of the catastrophic social experiments of our time, the designated-hitter rule. Can anyone doubt that a man who pines for the pristine days of nine-man baseball really loves America? More cleverly still, Will has used baseball to feign concern for the less fortunate. His advocacy of affirmative action for the Chicago Cubs may have scandalized some of his more obtuse conservative colleagues, but has any single action done more to show conservative concern for the truly needy? One can only hope that the advent of labor strife will make baseball interesting, finally, for liberals. Fortunately, there are signs now that some have been stirred to action or words. (See "Stee-rike!" by Nicholas von Hoffman, in this issue.) Unfortunately, they have responded in the tired, old liberal ways. Edward Bennett Williams called on the president to intervene in the strike, as if we were still living in the days of the imperial presidency. (The president refused.) Inevitably the next recourse was to the courts. Indeed, one Howard Orne of Chicago filed suit to force the baseball commissioner to end the strike. Orne neglected to specify how the commissioner might do so. Orne might at least have tried the new comparable worth doctrine. With ballplayers making an average of $175,000 and with the central strike issue being a camouflaged dispute over pay structure, an appeal to the comparable worth doctrine and a settlement dictated by the courts would be in keeping with the times. There is even a standard. A reporter once asked Babe Ruth if he thought it was fair that he was making more money than President Hoover. The Babe replied, "I had a better year than he did."

A mysterious group of old-guard Polish Communists recently issued a bitterly hard-line denunciation of the Polish reform movement. It was called the Katowice Declaration and probably was prompted, if not fabricated, by the Soviets. In any case, *Pravda* gave the declaration front-page treatment. Some Western observers interpreted this as part of a Soviet campaign of intimidation against Polish renewal. They point to passages like this: "Every day brings an expansion of liberal bourgeois and Trotskyist-Zionist views, as well as a rise of nationalism, agrarianism, clericalism, class solidarity, and anti-Sovietism." I believe that what we have here is instead the long-awaited key to the *Pravda* Sunday crossword puzzle. The above quotation alone contains answers to such perennial pencil-suckers as: What is a 17-letter word for Jew? Name the original sin of the pope's divisions (starts with "c"). Describe the cause of inexplicable resistance to a Soviet offer of "fraternal assistance" (has a hyphen, starts with "anti"). Describe the party line of that American rag, *The New Republic* (two words, starts with "I"). Or this passage could be one of *Pravda*'s readers' tests, in which an incorrect term is inserted into a series of otherwise consistent terms, like one of those what-is-wrong-with-this-picture IQ questions. (The correct answer is hidden with Khrushchevian subtlety somewhere in this Diarist.)

Several years ago the shah celebrated 2,500 years of Persian monarchy with an embarrassingly grandiose feast in the desert. His successors are demonstrating that they, too, have historical memory. In honor of the coming 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, they are conducting an elaborate reenactment. It began with the throwing open of the prisons and will end with the revolution eating its leaders. The Iranians have added one original twist, however. They are running the film backward. They started with a ruthless Napoleonic modernizer, and replaced him with a brutal medieval cleric who reintroduced canon law. Bani-Sadr was not medieval enough to survive his revolution. (It is only a matter of time before he is revealed as a Marrano Marxist-Leninist, a secret believer in its central dogma of class solidarity.) It is not known where Bani-Sadr is. I suggest that the mullahs check his bathtub first.

C.K.

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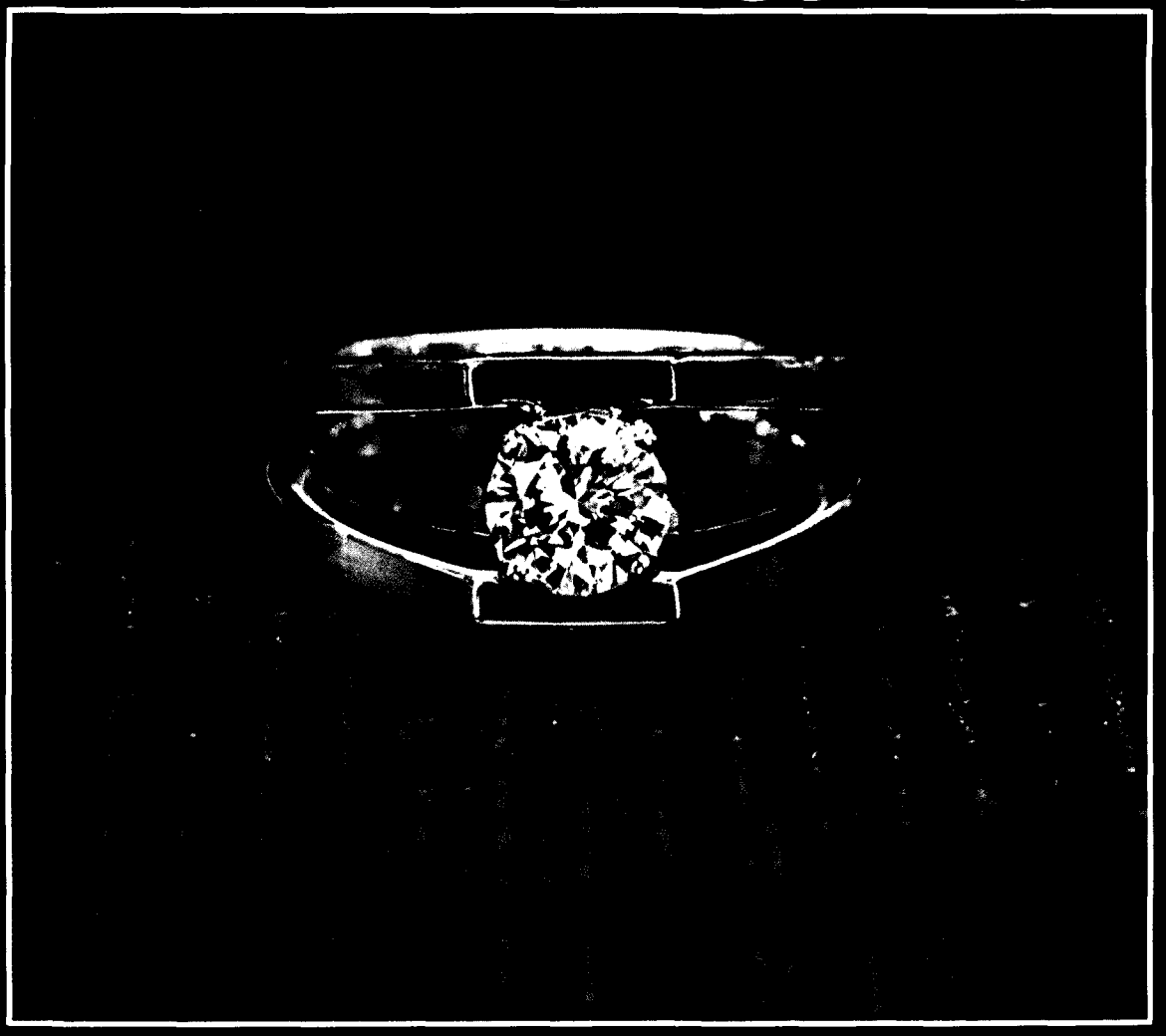

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